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**MERIDIAN SCHOOL CULTURE & CLIMATE**

**MISSION STATEMENT**
Meridian School’s mission is to provide an invigorating educational environment that develops responsible citizens who can artfully navigate our complex world and enjoy a good life with others. Each student will engage in diverse investigations, disciplined inquiry, and integrated service learning to cultivate intercultural awareness, creativity and mental acuity.

**CULTURE STATEMENT**

At Meridian School, we believe that we can fulfill the dual nature of our mission of the high standards and expectations of the IB curriculum with authentic, relevant inquiry experiences in a caring and supportive environment.

**INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE**
A major part of the Meridian charter is alignment with the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. Becoming a Primary Years Program (PYP), Middle Years Program (MYP), or Diploma Program (DP) requires a self-study and lengthy application process for each program. The PYP was authorized in March, 2013 and reauthorized in 2017; the DP was authorized in March, 2014; and the MYP was authorized in May 2017. The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a not-for-profit foundation, motivated by its educational mission, and focused on the student.

An important part of the culture of IB schools is the Learner Profile. Students, parents, and staff members at Meridian are asked to learn and place high importance on these attributes (as listed below). Members of the Meridian community will value and identify themselves as:

- **Inquirers** - We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

- **Knowledgeable** - We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

- **Thinkers** - We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

- **Communicators** - We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

- **Principled** - We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

- **Open-minded** - We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

- **Caring** - We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

- **Risk-takers** - We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges.
and change.

**Balanced** - We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, spiritual and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

**Reflective** - We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

**WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?**
Charter schools were authorized by the Texas Legislature in 1995 to provide an alternative to traditional public schools. Open-enrollment charter schools are, by choice, public schools that have the flexibility to adapt to the educational needs of individual students, and often provide a personalized learning environment that promotes greater student achievement. In exchange for some autonomy, charter schools have increased accountability, and must meet the testing standards dictated by the state.

Among other things, Texas Charter schools are tasked with: a) improving student learning, b) increasing the choice of learning opportunities within the public school system; c) establishing a new form of accountability for public schools, and d) encouraging different and innovative learning methods.

**Geographic Boundaries**
Meridian School is an open-enrollment public charter school, in which all students, except those adjudicated of a crime, living within Williamson County are eligible for enrollment on a space available basis. A traditional public school has small drawn boundaries and families within that district attend that school. A charter school generally has a much larger boundary and is therefore a school to which families can choose to attend should it be right for the child. The boundary for Meridian World School is the physical boundary of Williamson County.

**Funding**
Charter schools receive state funds based on the average daily attendance of students (same as traditional public schools); however, they do not receive funds from local tax revenue and the majority, including Texas charters, do not receive state facilities funding. Texas Education Agency (TEA) data indicates that charter schools receive approximately $1000 - $1200 less in total revenue per pupil than traditional public schools. In the State of Texas, the funding for students follows the student. Therefore, a school is funded based upon the children that attend that school.

**ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**
Meridian School does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, academic, athletic, or artistic ability, or the district the child would otherwise attend without regard to disability or handicapping condition, in administration or educational policies, admission and hiring policies and other school administered programs.

Educators are responsible for any unlawful discrimination by students under their supervision. Employees should immediately address and report any conduct by students that could be construed as discrimination. Employees may be terminated for failure to report and prevent discrimination.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**
Sexual harassment is the “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which interferes with an individual’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.” All reports of sexual harassment will be investigated. Any employee found to be responsible for sexual harassment will be terminated.

Educators are responsible for any intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment created by students under their supervision. Employees should immediately address and report any conduct by students that could be construed as sexual harassment. Employees may be terminated for failure to report and prevent sexual harassment.

Meridian has designated Mr. Rick Fernandez, Head of School, to coordinate its efforts to prevent sexual harassment and to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
**IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

(Meridian School Phone 512-660-5230)

Rick Fernández  
Head of School  

Karalei Nunn  
Founder & Chief Operating Officer  

Eileen Kuhn  
Chief Financial Officer  

Melissa Reese  
Principal of Primary School (K-5)  

Crystal Lane  
Interim Principal of Middle School (6-8)  

Charles Ryder  
Principal of High School (9-12)  

Ashley Larkey  
Assistant Principal of Primary School (K, 2, 4)  

Brooke Knight  
Assistant Principal of Primary School (1, 3, 5)  

Matthew Castaneda  
Assistant Principal of Middle School (6-7)  

Michaele Pansza  
Assistant Principal of Middle and High School (8-10)  

Stela Holcombe  
Assistant Principal of High School/DP Coordinator (11-12)  

Karmen Kynard  
Director of Special Education/504  

Haley Weisbrod  
Special Education Coordinator, Secondary (6-8)  

April Harris  
Special Education Coordinator, Secondary (9-12)  

Susan Mais  
Special Education Coordinator, Primary (K-5)  

Leah Lieurance  
PYP Coordinator  

Machczynski, Kristen  
MYP Coordinator  

Nancy Spence  
Counselor of Primary School (3-5)  

Staci Louth  
Counselor of Primary School (K-2)  

Laura Docherty  
Counselor of Middle School (8-9)  

Stefanie Zook  
Counselor of Middle School (6-7)  

Nick Manuszak  
Counselor of High School (10-12)  

Kathy Gregg  
College Counselor  

Paige Bender  
Compliance Coordinator  

Kathy Ilgen  
Executive Assistant to Head of School  

Kathy Finch  
Campus Coordinator Primary School  

Kristi Anderlohr  
Campus Coordinator Middle School  

Jessica Kress  
Campus Coordinator High School  

Janette Gaudiesus  
Registrar/PEIMS Coordinator  

Kelly Abbett  
Registrar Assistant  

Emily Murray  
Attendance/Receptionist - Primary School  

Olga Alexander  
Attendance/Receptionist - Middle School  

Shawn Seaman  
Attendance/Receptionist - High School  

Tina Van Winkle  
Librarian - Secondary School  

Kathi Denison  
School Nurse  

Lynn Gniot  
Middle School Clinical Assistant  

Sarah Gardner  
Communications Specialist  

Lynda Chapel  
Volunteer & Events Coordinator  

ViP Leadership  
ViPleaders@mwschool.org  

Board of Directors  
board@mwschool.org
CALENDAR

Meridian’s School Calendar has been developed based on the belief that a balanced schedule will contribute to increased student success. It ensures 175 instructional days for students, a one-week fall break, a week for Thanksgiving, a two-week winter break, and a one-week spring break. School will not end after May 31 or begin before August 1. The calendar is located in Appendix A.

ATTENDANCE

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Every Wednesday, students will be released early to allow teachers and administrators time to attend professional development and school-wide planning. Primary students will be released at 1:00 on Wednesdays and Secondary will be released at 1:30.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours of Instruction:</th>
<th>Day of Week</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>Release Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
<td>Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>3:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>1:05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6-12</td>
<td>Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.</td>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>4:05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6-12</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>1:35</td>
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ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Compulsory attendance for students who are at least six years old as of September 1 of the applicable school year is required by state law Texas Education Code 25.085. The law requires a student to attend public school until the student’s 18th birthday, unless the student is exempt under 25.086 of the Texas Education Code. This requirement is enforced through Texas Education Code 25.093 and 25.094.

We believe that students must learn the importance of punctuality and regular attendance as this will also help a student throughout his/her educational experience and will carry over to the world of work. Poor attendance is a major cause of poor grades and other problems which can also result in additional work for both the student and the teacher. Attendance is taken at 9:30 every morning for Primary and Secondary Students.

Additionally, as a public school, Meridian only receives funding for days that students actually attend school. Therefore, adherence to the attendance policies is twofold. In order to operate a school with an exceptional educational program without major budget issues, we expect our students and parents to strive for perfect attendance and keep absenteeism to a minimum when this is not possible. Attendance is especially important because charter schools receive less funding than traditional schools. Money lost for each absence, regardless of the reason when your child is absent, translates into fewer materials and fewer activities for our students.
**Parent Cooperation – Student Attendance**

Meridian requires cooperation from parents in the matter of school attendance and punctuality.

Parents should:

- Schedule routine medical and dental appointments after school hours when possible. When not possible, schedule appointments in the afternoon after the 9:30 attendance is taken.
- The calendar was deliberately planned to be balanced and allows many opportunities for family vacations. Please schedule your vacations during these off times.
- **Inform the office before 9:00 a.m. of any absences and notify the school prior to any planned absence.**
  Emails should be addressed to [attendance-primary@mwschool.org](mailto:attendance-primary@mwschool.org) (primary school absences), [tripleA@mwschool.org](mailto:tripleA@mwschool.org) (Triple-A absences), [attendance-ms@mwschool.org](mailto:attendance-ms@mwschool.org) (middle school absences), or [attendance-hs@mwschool.org](mailto:attendance-hs@mwschool.org) (high school absences). Phone calls are accepted as a form of notification, however phone calls will necessitate a written absence note upon return. Should a student be absent at 9:30 without notification, Meridian staff may contact parents to ensure that the student is at home.
- Ensure your child arrives and is picked up on time each day. Meridian does not have additional staff to monitor students who are left at school after dismissal.
- PRIMARY: Primary students should be picked up by 3:55 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday or by 1:25 on Wednesday. For more information see section titled Arrival and Departure Outside of School Hours.
- SECONDARY: Secondary students should be picked up no later than 4:30, unless staying for a club or study hall. Primary students who ride with a secondary student (i.e. “waiters”) must be picked up by 4:30, and may not stay for secondary clubs or study hall. For more information, see the section on Waiters. Families of these primary students not picked up on time will be charged a late fee of $1.00 per minute late. For more information see section titled Arrival and Departure Outside of School Hours.

**Absences**

Students are required to be in school except in cases of emergency, illness or religious observance. It is the parents’ and/or guardians’ responsibility to inform the School of an absence, as described in bold above. Students who are absent without advance written notification to the office for a period of six consecutive days will be automatically withdrawn on the seventh day of absence.

According to the Texas Education Code, students must be present at least 90% of the school days, unless otherwise exempted by the administrators. Because of the rigor of the IB curriculum and the limited public funding sources for charter schools, Meridian School has a standard of 95% attendance. **Nine (9) absences is considered a serious discipline offense, and if this occurs the School has the right to send the student back to his/her home campus.**

When a student reaches five (5) total absences within a six-month period, a letter will be sent home to parents/guardians indicating that continued absences may materially affect the student’s progress and enrollment at Meridian School. Nine absences for students may necessitate a meeting with the school’s attendance committee and possibly result in dismissal of a student to his/her home campus.

SECONDARY: As the Secondary School has several different classes that meet in one day, in addition to the whole day attendance described above, attendance per class is tracked as well. If a student misses 5 or more meetings of an individual class in a single semester (regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused), a plan will need to be developed by the Secondary Principal or Secondary Attendance Committee to determine what the student will need to do to receive credit for the class. Meridian follows Texas Education Code § 25.092, which stipulates that if a student attends less than 90% of the meetings of a class, credit for the class may not be awarded without such a plan.

**Excused Absences**

An absence may be considered excused under the following conditions:

1. **Personal illness** (Absences extending for three or more days require a note from a physician. A physician’s note may be requested for absences of shorter duration, at the administrator’s discretion. Parents should notify the school daily when the student is ill and unable to attend school.)
2. **Major religious holiday** of the family’s tradition (See Religious Holy Days section below)
3. **Emergency doctor or dental appointments** which cannot be made after school, accompanied by a note from physician (See Medical Appointments section below)
4. **A death in the family** (reasonable length of time as determined in consultation with appropriate school administrator)
5. **College visit** may be an excused absence for up to two days for a 10th grade student and up to four days for 11th and 12th grade students. A note from the college visited must be submitted.
6. Other necessary and justifiable reasons as excused by school administrators

**Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences are any absences that have not been excused as defined above and outlined by the Texas Education Agency. In order to remain current with the curriculum and maintain their educational progress, students will be required to complete make-up work.

*Please note that, in addition to the above mentioned, three (3) tardies are equal to, and will be recorded as, one (1) unexcused absence.*

SECONDARY: Work that is missed or turned in after the deadline due to an unexcused absence will receive the same grading penalties as late work. See the Grading Practices section of the Secondary School Program of Studies for details (click here for a link to its location on the Meridian School website: Secondary Academic Program of Studies).

**Truancy**

Any student who leaves school prior to the official dismissal time must check out through the Attendance Office prior to leaving. Students who fail to properly check out will be considered truant. Truancy is any absence without the prior knowledge and consent of the School or that which is in violation of state law and school disciplinary procedures. Students will not receive credit for school days for which they are truant. In addition, parents will be notified and for a first or second offence disciplinary measures such as detention or suspension will be taken. A third offence will be referred to the Head of School for possible expulsion from Meridian School.

**Tardiness**

Tardiness is disruptive to the learning process and can have a negative impact on the entire class. Parents and students share responsibility for being on time to school.

PRIMARY: Doors open thirty minutes before primary classes begin (7:30). Those students arriving prior to 7:30 are unsupervised outside of the building. This is highly discouraged and may result in calls from the school administration. **Primary classroom instruction begins promptly at 8:00 a.m.** All primary students who arrive after **8:05** are tardy and the parent or guardian must escort the student to the office and sign the student in. **Please note that, in addition to the above mentioned, three (3) tardies are equal to, and will be recorded as, one (1) unexcused absence.**

SECONDARY:  Doors open sixty minutes before secondary classes begin (7:30). **Secondary instruction begins at 8:30.** Students arriving after 8:30 must be checked in at the attendance office where an excuse or tardy will be recorded as appropriate. The student will receive an admittance slip and proceed to class.

Unexcused tardies for any class during the school day are cumulative for the semester. Failure to arrive on time for the first class of the day will have the following consequences:

- 2 Tardies: Warning from a principal
- 4 Tardies: Second warning from principal, and parent contact
- 6 Tardies: Saturday Detention

Consequences for tardies to classes later in the day follow a similar system of first a warning from the teacher to the student, then a warning from the teacher to the student and parent contact, and if tardies continue a saturday detention is assigned.

Additional consequence for tardy student drivers: Student drivers are expected to arrive to school on time daily. Student drivers sign an agreement when they receive their parking tag that states the following:
I understand that I will lose parking privileges for excessive tardies.

- 9 tardies = one week loss of privileges
- 12 tardies = one month loss of privileges
- 15 tardies = loss of privileges for remainder of academic year

**Medical Appointments**
In order to obtain a medically excused absence, a student must attend at least one class on the day of the appointment and present a doctor’s note to the school’s office within three (3) school days after the appointment. Schedule routine medical and dental appointments after school hours when possible. When not possible, schedule appointments in the afternoon after the 9:30 attendance is taken.

**Religious Holy Days**
Absences for the purpose of observing religious holy days will be excused if, before the absence, the parent/guardian submits a written request for the excused absence and documentation of the holiday. All work must be made up for the days missed. A request for work can also be submitted in writing prior to the absence. (Holidays are assumed to be for a single day unless otherwise documented.)

**Participation on the Day of an Absence**
Students who are absent from school may not be allowed to participate in the Triple A Program or school-related activities on that day or evening. Exceptions may be approved by campus administration only when requested by the activity sponsor. Absences resulting from a student’s participation in an organization not sanctioned by the School or on the approved list of activities will not be considered excused without prior approval by school administration.

**Return to School from an Absence**
All absences will require a note from the parent/guardian and/or doctor in order for the student to return to school. Absences must be cleared BY THE DAY OF RETURN with a written excuse sent with the student, via email to attendance@mwschool.org, or via the website, and signed by the parent/guardian. Notes must contain student’s full name, specific dates, and reason for absence. Missing a class or classes without written parent/guardian permission will result in a referral.

**Illness**
A child who is ill should not be sent to school since this may result in his/her health becoming worse and exposing others. Our policy states that students must be kept home if they have experienced abnormal temperature (100º F or above) or vomiting within the previous 24-hour period. Exceptions will only be made with written clearance from a medical doctor.

**Arrival and Departure Outside of School Hours**
Children may not be dropped off earlier than 7:30 because staff is not yet on duty. Those students arriving prior to 7:30 are unsupervised outside of the building. This is highly discouraged and may result in calls from the school administration.

**Primary Student Dismissal:** All primary students must be picked up by 3:55 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and no later than 1:15 on Wednesdays. Car duty/supervision concludes at 3:45 unless there are extenuating circumstances such as weather delays. After car duty concludes, students will be taken to the main office and parents must sign them out. Please call the office if you have an emergency situation.

**Secondary Student Dismissal:** Secondary students are dismissed at 4:05 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and at 1:30 on Wednesdays. Students are not to remain on school grounds after dismissal without adult supervision. A supervised after-school program, ‘After-School 6th-12th”, has been created for secondary students who are not in an approved after-school activity OR are not able to leave campus with an approved ride by 4:30 (2:00 on Wednesdays). In order to pay for the supervisory personnel required, a small, one-time annual fee is charged. This service and associated fee is required regardless of the length of time used each day or the number of days, with the exception of two (2) free ‘passes’ for extraordinary situations.
After-School 6th-12th ends at 5:45. Students must be picked up by 5:45 pm, or parents will be charged $5 for the first 1-5 minutes late, $10 for 6-10 minutes, $15 for 11-15 minutes, etc. Repeated late pick-ups may result in loss of After School 6th-12th privileges.

**Families with both Primary and Secondary Students / “Waiters”:** Meridian allows families who have both primary and secondary students the privilege of picking the students up together at the secondary departure time of 4:05. This is done so with the understanding that the primary student is supervised by Meridian staff only until 4:05 when the secondary student arrives to take the sibling out to the departure line and the secondary student is expected to look after their primary sibling. If however, the secondary student does not attend school that day or has after-school activities, the primary student *MUST* be picked up at the regular primary dismissal time of 3:35 p.m. or in the case that the students participate in a carpool, the primary student must be picked up at 4:05, escorted, and supervised by a secondary student from the carpool. If the secondary student has extra-curricular activities on campus after school, the secondary student must pick up the primary student and deliver them to the awaiting car prior to attending the extra-curricular activity.

Waiters is an optional program, and registration is required. If primary student waiters are not picked up by 30 minutes after secondary dismissal, a late fee will be charged (see Secondary After School, above). Repeated or excessive lateness will result in removal from waiters.

**Arriving Late or Leaving Early**
Parents must come into the school to sign students in or out. Parents should sign students out at the appropriate office (primary, middle or high school). If picking up students in multiple schools, high school students may be called to the primary or middle school office for pickup. Primary or middle school students must be signed out at their school office.

**Early Dismissals**
All students are required to remain at school until the end of the day. Any student who leaves school early without authorization is not eligible to participate in extracurricular activities that day. A student may be referred to administration for repeated violations of this requirement.

**PRIMARY:** Early pick-up of students during the 30 minutes prior to dismissal (3:00-3:30; 12:30-1:00) will not be done except in the case of emergency through an administrator. During this time, students are preparing for dismissal and transitioning to other areas of the building, making it difficult to locate them for the remaining minutes. Please schedule your appointments accordingly.

**Use of Facilities Before and After School**
Certain areas of the school will be accessible before and after school for a variety of school-approved activities. Students are required to remain in designated areas and with the teacher or activity sponsor at all times. Students will not be permitted to go to any other parts of the building unless otherwise given permission by the teacher or sponsor.
SCHOOL PROCEDURES

ENROLLMENT
Every year, Meridian will take applications for all grades that have openings. As in the traditional public school, all students who apply are accepted with the exception of those who have been adjudicated of a crime. If a grade is over-subscribed, a lottery is held as required by the State of Texas. Students are selected in a blind lottery until all open positions are filled. Students will continue to be selected and placed in order on the waiting list until the list is exhausted. The State of Texas allows exemptions from the lottery process for children of founders, teachers, staff, and siblings of students who are in the school.

Once the lottery process has ended, families will complete an enrollment package with all required data; i.e. immunization records, address, special needs, etc. Should the enrollment packages not be returned by the published date, the student's spot may be offered to the first available family on the waiting list.

Application Period - January 1st through the last day of February annually
Lottery - The Thursday prior to Spring Break

WAIT LIST
Students on the Wait List on the first instructional day of the school year (and those added during the year) will remain on the Wait List through the school year until they are offered a position or the parent/guardian requests removal in writing. Parents/guardians will be notified via email when their child’s name rises to the top. They will have a designated number of business days to respond as indicated in the email. If they respond “yes”, the student must matriculate by a certain date as indicated in the email. If they respond “no”, the name will be removed from or move to the bottom of the list as the decision of the parent/guardian. Students who have not been offered a position prior to the lottery for entry the following year will be required to re-enter the lottery for that school year. The State of Texas allows priority admittance to the following groups only: siblings, children of founders, teachers, and staff.

The Board of Directors at Meridian have approved a limited enrollment period for new students in grades 8-12 after school has started in August. New students will no longer be accepted after Labor Day if full-enrollment in that grade has been reached by that time, or the end of the first quarter if space allows.

ADMISSIONS
To be eligible for admission to Meridian School, regardless of school district, students (with the exception of the children of teachers/staff) must physically reside within the geographic boundaries of Williamson County prior to the first day of school. Students entering Kindergarten must be 5 years of age by September 1 of the entering year. Students entering 1st grade must be 6 years old by September 1 of the 1st grade year. If younger than 6, a child must have completed a public kindergarten school program.

Registration
Parents or guardians of new students should present the following items for their child at the time of registration:
● Birth certificate
● Immunization records
● Proof of residence in the school district (lease agreement, if renting; contract of sale or a tax statement, if purchasing)
● Last report card or withdrawal form from previous school district
● Social Security card

STUDENT CHOSEN NAMES AND PRONOUNS
At the beginning of the school year, students will have the opportunity to fill out a form identifying their chosen name and pronouns. Members of the student’s teaching team, as well as other faculty and staff, will use the student's chosen name and pronouns identified on the form. Parents may review the form upon request.

WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS
Please notify the school office prior to the day of withdrawal of your child. Students must clear fees (cafeteria, etc.), return
textbooks, library books, and other school property (e.g. athletic uniforms) prior to withdrawal.

**Student Withdrawal and Return**
Families who withdraw a child after enrollment in Meridian School and wish to return during the same school year will be placed at the end of the waitlist regardless of sibling priority. If a student is not admitted, application must be made again for the following school year. An exception is made for military families who leave the area based on a requirement of the military.

**Hazardous Weather – Closed Campus**
In the event of threatening conditions, we will take all necessary emergency precautions. If you have concerns about school closure or delayed openings because of weather conditions, please check the MWS website, official Facebook page, your email for a message from the administration, your texting service, and possibly the local media. Meridian School, recognizing that our families live throughout Williamson County, will determine closures based in part on other area school districts, but also the needs of our student body.

**Fire and Emergency Drills**
Meridian has incorporated the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) into its emergency procedures. Students and staff will follow the SRP during all drills and emergencies:

![Image of emergency protocol poster]

*(click image to enlarge)*

**Car Line**
All students attending Meridian must arrive by car. With approximately 1,000 families, and almost as many cars arriving on the campus in the morning and in the afternoon, families must adhere to the rules shared on the website to ensure safety and efficiency for all. The car tag, issued annually, and indicating the student’s identification number, is to be visible at all times when picking your student(s) up in the afternoon. If you do not have this and do not have the PikMyKid app with your child’s name visible on the app, you will have to park and go into the receptionist to acquire a new tag prior to picking up your students. This is for yours and your child’s protection.

Students may arrive as early as 7:30 a.m. at which time the doors to the building are opened. Parents are asked NOT to deliver students prior to 7:30 a.m. as there is no supervision on school grounds prior to that time.

**Primary Departure - 3:35** Parents may begin lining up for afternoon departure at 3:15 in the afternoon to assure access for visitors, vendors, and consultants who need to depart prior to the start of car line.

**Secondary Departure - 4:05** Parents may begin lining up at 3:55, but not before, to assure primary departure is complete.

Meridian School Parent/Student Handbook & Code of Conduct
**SECONDARY STUDENT DRIVING / PARKING**
Student Parking at Meridian is limited. Seniors have priority, and some juniors may get spaces as well. Students with a legal Texas driver’s license may ask the Assistant Principal of the High School for an application for permission to drive to and park on campus. Students must agree to follow the rules and regulations outlined in the application in order to be eligible to receive a student parking tag. Students with excessive tardies and unexcused absences may lose the privilege to drive and park on campus.

**STUDENT VEHICLES ON CAMPUS**
A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle parked on district property and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others [See the Student Code of Conduct]. Vehicles parked on district property are under the jurisdiction of the district. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable suspicion to do so, with or without the permission of the student. If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the student’s parent will be contacted.

**OUTSTANDING BALANCES & OBLIGATIONS**
It is our goal that all students remain in good financial standing throughout the year so that we can provide the most optimal learning opportunities for our students and families. Participation in many student activities will be limited if there are fees owed to Meridian, including past-due balances in cafeteria accounts, or library and school supply fees. Students will not be able to attend class and club trips, dances, prom, and other paid elective activities if there are balances outstanding more than thirty days or if payment arrangements have not been made with the Business Office. Many fees can now be paid directly by credit card through the MySchoolBucks account system. Please contact the teacher sponsor or grade level team leader prior to reaching out to the business office regarding any outstanding balances. Meridian is very willing to work with families who may need payment plans or additional financial assistance.

**STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS**
All students will be issued a student ID. Students may use their student ID for the cafeteria lunch scanner. If an ID is lost and a $5 replacement fee will be charged.

**SERVICE/ASSISTANCE ANIMAL USE BY STUDENTS**
A dog that is individually trained to work (perform disability-mitigating tasks) may act as a service animal to a child with a disability. The work must directly relate to the individual’s disability. If the service animal meets the criteria as outlined by the Americans with Disability Act, the student is entitled to use the service animal in the school setting.

- “Work” is not defined as emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship; such work does not qualify for public access rights.
- The animal must be under control of the handler and be housebroken.

A parent of a student who uses a service/assistance animal because of the student’s disability must submit an application and request in writing to the principal before bringing the service/assistance animal on campus. Parents will submit documentation from a medical provider as well as the proper training certifications for the animal. The district will try to accommodate a request as soon as possible, but will do so no later than 10 district business days after the request is submitted.
COMMUNICATION & INVOLVEMENT

At Meridian School we believe that establishing and maintaining fluid communications with the home enhances a child’s success at school.

FORMS OF COMMUNICATION
To foster communication, Meridian School will communicate in the following ways:
- Post current events and other important School related information on the website at www.mwschool.org
- Meridian World School Official Facebook page
- Weekly email newsletters (Primary Pride, Secondary Lions Share, Secondary Athletic, ViP)
- Periodic emails
- Parent education events & orientations
- “Coffee with Administrators” events

Electronic Communication and Faculty Responsibilities
Effective communication is an essential component of any successful organization, and the Board wishes to encourage this type of communication among all Meridian stakeholder groups and constituents. To that end, it is recognized that electronic communication is frequently used to achieve communication between parties on a timely basis. It is important to identify when electronic communication is appropriate, when it is not, and how to best utilize this method of communication for maximum effectiveness in the school setting.

Electronic Communication between parents and teachers shall be used for short and precise exchanges to:
1. Plan or schedule meetings between a parent and teacher or between faculty/staff members.
2. Answer a brief factual/logistical question about a student’s homework assignment or scheduling of a test, quiz, or project, (i.e. when tests, quizzes, or projects will be given or when they are due).
3. Announce trip arrangements and logistics.

Electronic Communication on these topics shall be timely and concise. As such, inquiries sent via electronic communication shall be responded to by faculty/staff within forty-eight (48) hours or less of their receipt from a parent or student (weekends and holidays excepted). The same courtesy is expected from parents and students.

Electronic Communication between parents and teachers shall not be used for substantive discussions and conversations. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
1. Discussions about a student’s (or students’) behavior or conduct, either in or outside of the classroom, on or off campus
2. Discussions regarding a student’s (or students’) academic performance or any aspect of student life protected as confidential under State and/or Federal law (i.e., special education needs, learning disabilities, discipline imposed, etc.)
3. Discussions regarding teaching methods, subject content, policy or administrative decisions or discipline measures/decisions

All communication on topics such as these shall occur in face-to-face meetings or telephone conversations, as appropriate. Such meetings and/or telephone conversations shall be set and/or occur in a timely fashion.

Faculty/staff members are prohibited from using social media, personal email accounts, or third-party websites to communicate with students or parents about any Meridian-related matters.

AUDIO / VISUAL RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHS
Meridian School does not allow the recording of conversations or meetings with teachers or staff without prior consent of all parties. This pertains to students as well as staff and parents. If all parties consent, the recording should begin with a record of that consent with stated approval by each party. No person will be allowed to do video/audio recording in any learning environment without the teacher’s and/or administrator’s permission. Parents and students may not photograph other students in the school without teacher or administrator permission.

Meridian School Parent/Student Handbook & Code of Conduct
PARENT – STUDENT – TEACHER CONFERENCES
Refer to ‘Academics’ section in this handbook.

ANONYMOUS REPORTING OF BULLYING
Meridian strives to maintain a safe, caring, respectful environment. Bullying will not be tolerated. Students or parents who are aware of an instance of bullying are encouraged to report it to an administrator, and it will be investigated per the Meridian anti-bullying policy. Incidents of bullying can also be reported via the CatapultEMS system, which can be found under the Students or Parents menu of the school website.

RESOLUTIONS FOR CONFLICT AND CONCERNS
The purpose of this policy is to provide individuals with an orderly process for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and parent complaints. The Board expects that complaints be resolved at the lowest possible administrative level.

The Board encourages students and parents to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate staff member or other campus administrator.

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Informal Conflict Resolution

Pre-Level 1 Process:
Participation in this informal resolution process shall be mandatory prior to the filing of a Level One complaint. The Board expects that every reasonable effort shall be made to resolve a complaint at the informal level. At the informal resolution stage, there shall be an in-person meeting or telephone conference between the principal and the individual to discuss the possible complaint. The principal may obtain the assistance of other administrators in an effort to reach an informal resolution of the complaint. The principal shall have the right to unilaterally extend the time for filing a complaint in the event the principal is continuing the process of informal resolution of the complaint. If however, it appears that an informal resolution is not possible, the principal shall review this complaint policy with the parent and provide a copy of the complaint process.

Formal Resolution

Level 1: Written Complaint to Campus Principal
When a Meridian School student or guardian of a student has a complaint or concern regarding Meridian School, the individual shall first bring their complaint or concern in writing to the appropriate campus principal. The complaint must be brought within 15 business days of the date that the complainant knew or should have known of the alleged harm. The complaint must be specific, and where possible suggest a resolution. The principal must hear the complaint, attempt to remedy the complaint in the best interest of the affected parties, and document the outcome. The principal must respond to the complainant and issue a final decision within 10 business days of the principal’s receipt of the complaint.

Level 2: Written Appeal to Head of School
If the individual bringing the complaint is not satisfied with the campus principal’s final decision, then the individual may file a written appeal to the Head of School. The written appeal shall be filed with the Head of School’s office within 10 business days of the individual’s receipt of the campus principal’s final decision. The complaint shall include a copy of the written complaint to the campus principal along with a copy of the campus principal’s final decision. A copy of the appeal shall also be delivered to the campus principal.

The appeal must be specific, and where possible suggest a resolution. The complaint shall not include any new issues or complaints unrelated in the original complaint expressed to the campus principal.
The Head of School or the Head of School’s designee shall respond to the complaint and issue a final decision within 15 business days of receipt of the written appeal.

### Level 3: Written Appeal to Board of Directors
If the individual bringing the complaint is not satisfied with the Head of School’s final decision, the individual may appeal their complaint in writing to the Meridian School Board of Directors within 10 business days of receiving the Head of School’s final decision. The complaint shall be addressed to the President of the Board, and shall include a copy of the written complaint to the Head of School, along with a copy of the Head of School’s final decision. A copy of this appeal shall also be delivered to the Head of School. The President of the Board, at the next regular meeting of the Board, shall provide a copy of the appeal record to all board members. The Board’s decision shall be decided on a review of the record developed at the Head of School’s level. Any action of the Board of Directors regarding the complaint shall be taken in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The decision by the Board is final.

### Civil Rights Discrimination Complaints—Cafeteria
Any complaint of civil rights discrimination involving Meridian’s cafeteria service will be referred immediately to the office of the Head of School, and will then be forwarded to the Texas Department of Agriculture for possible investigation and action by the State and/or USDA. Complaint procedures, instructions and forms are available in the office of the Head of School. A complaint of this nature will be addressed internally as well, through the procedures outlined above under Formal Resolution, Level 2 and Level 3.

### Title IX Complaints
Meridian World School prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. Meridian World School further prohibits retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process. Any complaint of this nature will be referred immediately to the Title IX coordinator for possible investigation and action, as outlined in the Board Student Policy for Prohibited Discrimination, Retaliation and Harassment.

**NOTE:** The entire adopted Policy for Prohibited Discrimination, Retaliation and Harassment is added to the Handbook Appendix.

### Volunteer Opportunities and Expectations
Parent involvement is vital to the School’s success and to the success and achievement of each child. Each parent’s talents, skills and energies are wholly welcomed toward that end.

Research on student achievement indicates that when parents are active members of the child’s school life, the child's academic progress accelerates and self-esteem blossoms. Based on this research, parents are strongly encouraged to be involved by volunteering. It is the expectation of Meridian School that each family will volunteer at least 20 hours over the course of each school year.

The Volunteers-in-Partnership (ViP) organization is a group of parents who coordinate volunteer activities within the school. Parent volunteers do not work within the classroom in an instructional capacity. However, there are many opportunities to become involved, including the Lion Dads group, fundraising, communications, etc. Information on volunteering is communicated by the organization Co-Chairs on a regular basis through emails and on the school website.

### Gifts to Faculty, Staff, and Administration
Gifts, kind notes, and other signs of appreciation are welcome, but please be aware that due to state law and school policy, Meridian employees may not accept gifts of more than $50 value, nor any gift that might be perceived as an effort to influence the employee.

### Parent Involvement Policy
Meridian School believes that parents are partners in their child’s education and that parent involvement is essential. Everyone gains if school and home work together to promote high student achievement. Your support for your
children, and for the school, is critical to your children’s success.

Meridian School’s Volunteers in Partnership (ViP) is a parent-run, membership-free, volunteer organization which coordinates volunteer activities at Meridian. ViP partners with Meridian administration to support the staff, our students, and Meridian’s mission. ViP is not affiliated with PTA, which makes it different from what many parents may be accustomed to. For example, there is no membership fee; it is independent of any other parent/teacher group; it works closely with school leadership; and it is a new and original group – created to serve our one-of-a-kind school.

In addition, Meridian will communicate regularly with parents through electronic media, including the school website, regular newsletters and whole-school emails. The school will also seek to involve parents by holding informational meetings to inform parents of school curriculum, administrator coffees for informal questions and conversation, and through scheduled parent conferences.

Visiting the School

Before visiting any area of the school, visitors (including parents and guardians) must check in at the school’s office. Parents must carry some form of photo identification and check in through the Raptor System. The Raptor Security System has the ability to scan drivers’ licenses or state-issued ID cards and perform background checks. All visitors must successfully complete the check before they will be allowed to enter the school beyond the foyer with a staff member.

To ensure the security of our students, doors to classroom areas will remain locked during the school day. Meridian’s policy does not permit parents or visitors to be in classrooms unless there is a specific need and prior approval and coordination is done through the administrator and teacher prior to the date. This is an effort to minimize distractions and maximize student learning, as well as to ensure confidentiality and the safety of our children. State law prohibits the interruption of classes, so parents should not attempt to talk to teachers during the instructional day without an appointment.

PRIMARY: On the first day of school, all parents/guardians/secondary siblings will be able to walk their primary student (K-5) to the classroom. Parents will not be able to conference with teachers during this time, as the supervision of children is the first priority. After the first day, parents/guardians/secondary siblings of kindergarten may walk their child to the classroom. Beginning the following Monday, parents/guardians/secondary siblings may drop their child off in the car drop-off area, or walk them to the foyer. Students will be supervised by staff as they proceed from there to class.

Meridian’s Primary cafeteria space necessitates the lunch program run from approximately 10:30 – 12:30. Unfortunately at this time there is no space for parents to have lunch with their Primary School child. However, volunteering in the cafeteria is a way to see your child at lunch. Parents are required to attend training for these volunteer positions and to sign up for a 30-minute block of time to assist the Primary School cafeteria monitors. Volunteers assist the staff and all students with their lunch needs. It is not a time for parents to stand by their child or assist them in eating their lunch, however it is a great time to get to know our students!

Volunteer opportunities are also available during the day for library times. There is no assurance that you may be able to work during your student’s class library time. However, parents are welcome to sign up for blocks of time that are available. A training is required prior to volunteering. Information about these volunteer programs goes home during the first few weeks of school.

Solicitation of Goods and Services

The solicitation of goods and services is not allowed on campus by parents and students except during school sanctioned events. While we understand that we have many talented persons and successful companies within our parent community, connections should not be made through solicitation. No printed information may be distributed to staff or parents through the school. Any connection between businesses and the school should be made through the administration. All goods or services purchased privately outside of school should be delivered off campus and not through students.
CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

UNIFORM / DRESS CODE POLICY

At Meridian School, we believe that the purpose of uniforms is to foster a sense of community and to allow students to focus on what matters most in the classroom, the academics.

The intent of the Meridian dress code is to provide a degree of visual uniformity, thus reducing distractions in the learning environment. This intent informs the decisions made regarding the dress code.

All clothing must fit appropriately, not too tight or too loose, and be in good condition and clean. Items worn (shoes, socks, jewelry and hair accessories) that are distracting will not be permitted. School administrators will have discretion in the determination of items that are considered distractions to the learning environment.

Specific Information on the Primary and Secondary Uniform/Dress Code Policy is given in a comprehensive pictorial guide located on the school website under both Students and Parents (to access to page on the school website, click on the following link: Primary & Secondary Uniform Guides).

Dress Code Violations
Uniform violations are considered a disciplinary issue and will be handled as follows in both Primary and Secondary:

Dress Code Violations - Primary
1st Violation: Written and/or verbal warning from teacher or administrator.
2nd Violation: Written warning from teacher or administrator.
3rd Violation: Written warning from teacher or administrator and parent contact.
4th Violation: Discipline referral will be issued with parent contact from administrator.

In some cases, students will be required to correct a dress code violation immediately by changing into uniform from the Clothes Closet or it may require that the parent bring appropriate clothing/shoes to school.

Dress Code Violations - Secondary
Parents will be called to bring clothes or, if available, the school will provide an alternative item to wear. The student is placed in CM until clothing arrives, or all day if no clothes are brought.

The same process will be followed for repeat violations, and in addition a detention will be assigned.

TECHNOLOGY USE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS
Resources such as laptops, Chromebooks, and tablets are available for checkout by teachers for instructional purposes within the classroom. In these and other uses of technology, all students are expected to abide by the Technology Acceptable Use Policy, which is included in Appendix A of this handbook.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) in Grades 8 through 12
In order to increase technology access in High School, Meridian has adopted a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy. Students in grades 8 through 12 should bring a device such as a laptop, Chromebook, or tablet to school daily for use in their classes. Students have the option of purchasing their own device, or they can lease one from the school. Meridian does not guarantee availability of school-provided devices to students who choose not to bring their own device, lease a
device, or forget to bring their device to school. The business office will work with families who are experiencing financial hardship to assure that all students are able to participate in BYOD.

Students who misuse their device may lose the privilege to bring their own device.

**Use of Cell Phones**

Cell phones, or devices that have call, text, or internet capabilities similar to cell phones, fall under the Meridian policy on use of cell phones.

Students are allowed to have cell phones at Meridian School with the following restrictions:

Students may not use cell phones as cameras to audio or video record at Meridian, unless authorized by a teacher or administrator. Due to the concern for inappropriate use of photographs on social media sites, this is strictly regulated. Violations will be considered a disciplinary infraction as discussed in the Meridian Code of Conduct.

PRIMARY: Students must keep cell phones in their backpacks unless they have the approval of their teacher to have in the classroom. Cell phones are not to be taken to other areas of the building unless approved by an administrator.

SECONDARY: Middle School: Middle school students may not use cellphones before school, during their lunch, or during school unless otherwise directed by administration. All times during the instructional day (including between classes), require the explicit permission of the teacher.

High School: High school students may carry cell phones and may use them before school, after school, and during lunch, unless otherwise directed by administration. All other times during the instructional day (including between classes), require the explicit permission of the teacher. Cell phones should not be taken to the restroom during class time; they should be left in the classroom. There also may be additional rules and restrictions concerning the use of electronic devices during before or after school activities such as clubs and after school study hall, as well as other times as the administration deems appropriate.

Students who feel unwell should not call or text home to be picked up without first going to the nurse. The nurse will evaluate a student and contact their parents if the student is excused to go home due to illness.
Academics

At Meridian School, we believe that education plays a significant role in developing human potential and forming the fibers of social and economic development. We aim for Meridian School to cultivate college-ready, thoughtful and effective citizens who can thrive in our 21st century knowledge-based world. The reality is that persons in the 21st Century must learn "how to learn" and "relearn" concepts and retool skills for emerging and rapidly changing fields of expertise and challenging practicalities in our complex world. Students must be prepared as workers and citizens to successfully navigate the environmental and social organization of regions, global economy, and expanding contact across cultures in the immediate future.

What Makes Meridian Unique?

The International Baccalaureate Program

Meridian School will comply with all state, TEA and charter regulations to ensure that each student graduates with a Texas high school diploma. A major part of the Meridian charter is alignment with the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. Becoming a Primary Years Program (PYP), Middle Years Program (MYP), or Diploma Program (DP) requires a self-study and lengthy application process for each program. Meridian School is an authorized IB World School with the PYP (authorized March 2013), MYP (authorized May 2017), and DP (authorized March 2014).

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a not-for-profit foundation, motivated by its educational mission, and focused on the student.

What Makes IB Unique? (text taken from www.ibo.org)

- It offers a continuum of education, consisting of three programs for students aged 3 to 19.
- It has a reputation for high-quality education sustained for over 40 years.
- It encourages international-mindedness in IB students. To do this, IB believes that students must first develop an understanding of their own cultural and national identity.
- It fosters a positive attitude to learning by encouraging students to ask challenging questions, to critically reflect, to develop research skills, to learn how to learn, and to participate in community service.
- It ensures that the programs are accessible to students in a wide variety of schools – national, international, public and private.

The Learner Profile is IB’s mission statement translated into a set of learning outcomes for the 21st century. These are the values that should infuse the culture and ethos of all IB World Schools. Please reference these in the ‘School Culture and Climate’ section of this handbook.

The teaching professionals at Meridian have written a unique curriculum that fuses IB values and practices with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards. To view the TEKS, which are the state standards for what students should know and be able to do for each subject and grade level, visit the Texas Education Agency website. Students will inquire, make connections, develop conceptual understanding, think critically, work collaboratively, consider multiple perspectives, construct meaning, reflect, and take action. IB helps students to develop critical thinking skills, to become independent, to work collaboratively and to take a disciplined approach to studying. The school also seeks to provide students with an international perspective and to foster a commitment to service in one’s community at the local, national and international level.

Approaches to Learning Skills (ATL)

Through approaches to learning in IB programs, students develop skills that help them “learn how to learn”. Approaches to learning skills can be learned and taught, improved with practice and developed incrementally. They have relevance across the curriculum and provide a solid foundation for learning independently and with others.

With support from Meridian School's IB Coordinators, teachers at all levels of the continuum plan, align, and integrate all skills from the five ATL domains (Communication, Social, Self-Management, Research, and Thinking) in order to
support all other IB program elements and subject areas.

The Primary Years Program (PYP)
The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a non-profit organization focused on specific goals in relation to student education. Meridian is an authorized IB Primary Years Program for elementary age students (kindergarten through fifth grades).

The PYP is built upon instruction through inquiry and questioning and the teaching of the whole child through a transdisciplinary (all subjects) approach. Within the PYP it is believed that student learning is best done when it is authentic – relevant to the “real” world – where the learning is not confined within the boundaries of the traditional subject areas but is supported and enriched by them. Much of the teaching in primary grades will be done through the six units of inquiry in each grade level. All fall within the transdisciplinary themes of Who we are; Where we are in place and time; How we express ourselves; How the world works; How we organize ourselves; and Sharing the planet. Students work both independently and in cooperative groups to do research, solve problems, and present findings.

In addition to the attributes of the Learner Profile, the PYP also works to teach students that an internationally minded person should develop personal Attitudes toward others, toward learning, toward the environment, etc. These attitudes are strongly encouraged and are the basis of our character education program. They include appreciation, commitment, confidence, cooperation, creativity, curiosity, empathy, enthusiasm, independence, integrity, respect, and tolerance. This learning creates students who see themselves as able to make a difference in their world. As a prelude to service learning projects, students in the PYP are exposed to opportunities to participate in Action projects and learn to do Action on their own.

Key Concepts help drive the curriculum by helping the learner construct meaning through improved critical thinking and increased coherence across the curriculum. These concepts are: form, function, causation, change, connection, perspective, responsibility, and reflection. Students are taught through the use of questions in these concept areas, which helps increase the depth of their inquiry.

Transdisciplinary Skills called Approaches to Learning help students conduct purposeful inquiry and be well prepared for lifelong learning. Students are encouraged to master a range of skills beyond those normally referred to as basic. These include thinking skills, social skills, communication skills, research skills, and self-management skills. The PYP also believes that education must extend beyond the intellectual to include not only socially responsible attitudes but also thoughtful and appropriate action. Students are encouraged to take opportunities to engage in purposeful and beneficial activities to serve others.

The primary curriculum at Meridian has been developed to work well with and complement IB requirements and expectations. The guided reading and guided math programs use an inquiry approach rather than a workbook/worksheet format, with the goal of creating independent and life-long learners. Science and Social Studies are most often taught through IB Units of Inquiry. Parents of Meridian students are strongly encouraged to attend Parent Information Nights to learn about the program.

The Middle Years Program (MYP)
While the Primary Years Program (PYP) for grades K-5 is transdisciplinary, with all the subjects taught in a single classroom and projects that combine the disciplines of language, math, science, social studies, and the arts; the Middle Years Program (MYP) for grades 6-10 is interdisciplinary. This means that students take separate classes in the academic disciplines (known as “subject groups”), while teachers create links in their teaching units between the different disciplines.

The MYP Key Concepts serve to engage higher order thinking and provide a focus for making connections across the subject groups.
### Key Concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aesthetics</th>
<th>Changes</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connections</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Global interactions</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Time, place and space</td>
<td>Systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MYP Subject Groups

Each year in the MYP, students take courses in eight subject groups. The groups are below, with some elaboration of Meridian School course offerings in parentheses. For details on Meridian School Secondary course offerings, please see the Secondary Academic Program of Studies and Secondary Course Guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language and Literature (English)</th>
<th>Language Acquisition (French or Spanish)</th>
<th>Individuals and Societies (History and Geography)</th>
<th>Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Arts (Theater &amp; Visual Arts)</td>
<td>Physical and Health Education</td>
<td>Design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the MYP, students develop their communication, social, self-management, research, and thinking skills through Approaches to Learning.

Global Contexts in MYP provide a starting point for inquiry and help students develop their understanding of international mindedness.

For further details on the elements of the MYP, please see the Secondary Academic Program of Studies (click here for a link to its location on the Meridian School website: Secondary Academic Program of Studies).

### The Diploma Program (DP)

The Diploma Program (DP) is offered for grades 11-12. In order to qualify for an IB Diploma, over two years students take the Theory of Knowledge course and courses in all six IB subject groups, complete the Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) program, and write an extended essay (EE).

While the Primary Years Program is transdisciplinary and the Middle Years Program is interdisciplinary, the Diploma Program is disciplinary. Cross-subject group units may be less frequent, but interdisciplinary connections are made through the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) class. In this unique course, students explore the connections and similarities between the various subjects and examine the interdisciplinary meaning of knowledge.

### IB Diploma Program Courses

The IB Diploma Program curriculum is divided into six subject groups. The IB Diploma candidate is required to select on subject from each of the six subject groups below. Students in their junior (11th grade) and senior (12th grade) years must successfully complete at least three and not more than four of the six subjects at the Higher Level (HL). The other subjects are taken at the Standard Level (SL). All courses are two years in length. In addition, students take a seventh IB course, TOK, over the junior and senior years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Group</th>
<th>Meridian Course Offerings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Language and Literature</td>
<td>HL / SL English Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Language Acquisition</td>
<td>HL / SL French, HL / SL Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS)
Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) is at the heart of the IB Diploma Program, and involves students in a range of activities alongside their academic studies throughout the Diploma Program. A particular activity will fall under one or more of the three strands of CAS:

- **Creativity:** arts and other experiences that involve creative thinking
- **Activity:** physical exertion that contributes to a healthy lifestyle, such as sports and other exercise
- **Service:** an unpaid and voluntary exchange that has learning benefit for the student

Ultimately, CAS helps ensure that student academic growth is accompanied by fulfilling personal growth.

Extended Essay (EE)
The Extended Essay is a piece of research writing up to 4,000 words in length that students complete over the second half of the junior year and first half of the senior year. Students may choose to write their EE in any subject area in which they are taking an IB Diploma Program course. With the assistance of an EE supervisor in that subject, students craft a question that they wish to answer, research a variety of sources (and if their EE is in the Sciences, design and carry out an experiment), and write an analytical answer to their question. The EE prepares students extremely well for completing similar tasks in college.

For further details on the elements of the Diploma Program, please see the Secondary Academic Program of Studies (click here for a link to its location on the Meridian School website: Secondary Academic Program of Studies).

Social Emotional Learning and the MindUp Program
Meridian School strives to foster both academic and social emotional growth and learning. The school utilizes both IB ATL Skill instruction as well as lessons from the MindUP™ program to teach social and emotional learning skills that link cognitive neuroscience, positive psychology and mindful awareness training utilizing a brain centric approach. Students learn to self-regulate behavior and engage in focused concentration required for academic success. For more information about the MindUP™ program, visit the Hawn Foundation website at http://thehawnfoundation.org/mindup/.

Second Language
A second language is required by the Primary Years Program for children ages 7 and up. The primary language program at Meridian focuses on the ability to speak and comprehend two languages. K-5 students will attend Spanish and/or French classes, depending on grade level. Once in the secondary school, students will choose either French or Spanish, and will continue to develop fluency in that language throughout the Middle Years and Diploma programs.

The Arts
The arts at Meridian provide a means of communication and expression; opportunities to become skilled; a connection to other disciplines; connections to other cultures; and a means to reflect and inquire. The arts are considered by the IB to be an important part of learning and are valued at Meridian. Students will learn the disciplines of visual arts, music and drama, as well as learning about the arts (the skills and processes involved) and through the arts (artists, perspectives, themes and ideas using the arts). In all areas of learning, the teachers will value imagination, creativity and original thinking. This will be especially evident through the arts. The creative disciplines of visual arts, music and drama are closely connected to each other, as well as having strong links to other disciplines. The creative process is seen as a driving force in learning through inquiry. Students are encouraged to consider the arts as a means of communication and as an expressive language.
**Physical Education**

The PE scope and sequence identifies major expectations and is considered essential at Meridian. These expectations include body control and spatial awareness, athletics, movement to music, games, and health-related activities. Through PE, students learn the “language” of physical movement. They learn to understand what they can and cannot do physically and become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in this discipline. Physical activity is an essential aspect of a well-balanced, healthy lifestyle and learning through PE and sporting activities builds self-esteem, confidence, cooperation and fitness. Meridian’s physical education classes devote over 50% of the weekly class time to moderate or vigorous physical activity, as required by TEC 28.002(d)(3). At the conclusion of the school year, parents may make a written request to receive their child's physical fitness assessment results.

**Service Learning**

At Meridian School, we believe that all students gain from integrated service learning that brings subject matter to life, enhances academic achievement, personal development and democratic civic engagement, thereby cultivating students’ discerning judgment and “can do” spirit.

Our service learning program will be integrated throughout the curriculum and will emphasize both service and learning equally through developmentally appropriate, experiential learning opportunities. Students will be encouraged and supported to initiate their own service projects as they see needs in their communities. This begins with the IB requirements of “Action” and the action cycle in grades K-5, continues with service experiences through the MYP, and culminates with the Creativity, Activity & Service (CAS) experience for DP students.

**Grading**

At Meridian we believe that assessment should be viewed as part of the teaching-learning cycle in the learning process. The purpose of grading is to evaluate progress, communicate learning goals, set new learning goals, and motivate students.

**Grading and Assessment Beliefs**

For learners, assessment does the following:
- a) Promotes efficient learning by focusing the student's attention on what is important
- b) Promotes understanding and life-long learning
- c) Promotes self-evaluation and self-monitoring by the use of well-defined expectations and criteria
- d) Motivates learning by communicating progress concerning what a student knows and is able to do
- e) Helps understand how school learning relates to present world and future goals.

For teachers, assessment does the following:
- a) Provides formative and summative data about student learning
- b) Provides diagnostic data to improve learning
- c) Assists instructional planning by providing informed feedback
- d) Helps to determine teaching effectiveness - what approaches and methods work
- e) Helps to determine whether the program is achieving desired goals (program accountability)
- f) Is a tool for communicating to others

For administrators, assessment does the following:
- a) Assists in determining the effectiveness of programs
- b) Assists in determining school and grade-level learning goals
- c) Assists in allocation of resources, including professional development
- d) Monitors student achievement and supports student learning

For parents, assessment does the following:
- a) Provides formative and summative data about student learning and attainment.
- b) Provides information about the child’s learning experience in school.
c) Provides information about future educational opportunities.

d) Helps provide information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of both the instructional program and the individual learner.

Primary Grading and Assessment
The staff and administration of the Primary Years Program work collaboratively to build an assessment program that includes a variety of opportunities to assess student learning. Working to ensure that we communicate the entirety of student learning, our assessment menu consists of: pre-assessment, formative and summative, formal and informal, and self-reflective assessments. Students in grades kindergarten through five receive 4 report cards per year; 2 of which are are anecdotal, and 2 that include a parent-teacher conference coupled with a report of student progress. The anecdotal student report cards will accompany the 2nd and 4th quarter reporting period, while the student-parent conference and report of student progress will communicate academic measures for the 1st and 3rd quarters. Students in grade five receive alpha grades to assist in preparing them for their transition to middle school.

Secondary Grading and Assessment
Numerical grades in middle and high school will be assessed to chart the academic performance of students in the secondary program. Grades indicated on the report cards will be rounded grades and the following numerical assessments will be utilized to indicate academic performance:

A = 100 - 90 points
B  = 89 - 80 points
C  = 79 - 70 points
F  = 69 points and below
I  = Incomplete for extenuating circumstances (to be determined by teachers)

On IB assessments, students will be graded according to the IB assessment criteria for the subject, and based upon student achievement against these criteria a grade of 1-7 will be awarded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Outstanding Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Excellent Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Good Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Satisfactory Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Limited Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Very Limited Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Minimal Achievement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please consult the Secondary Academic Program of Studies for further details on grading practices in the secondary school (click here for a link to its location on the Meridian School website: Secondary Academic Program of Studies).

Progress Reports

At Meridian School we believe that information on student progress should be reported regularly and as thoroughly as possible.

PRIMARY
- Meridian School will send home four (4) evaluation report cards each year. The reports will be sent home at the end of each nine (9) week period. Reports will require a parent signature.
- Each primary report card will be accompanied by a Learner Profile Reflection Form. Parents will need to complete the box indicated in response to their student’s reflection on an attribute of the learner profile and return to the school. These reflection forms will be a part of the student portfolio which will be kept during their years at Meridian, with content returned to students when they leave the school or move to 6th grade.
- Student-led conferences will be held two times a year in primary grades. The first is held in the first semester and is used to share assessment information and set learning goals. The second conference, held towards the end of the school year, is to share assessment information and celebrate the learner's accomplishments.
- Parent – teacher conferences are scheduled as needed throughout the year.

**SECONDARY**
- Meridian School will send home four (4) quarterly evaluation report cards each year. The reports will be sent home at the end of each nine (9) week period.
- At the mid-point of each quarter, a progress report for all classes will be sent home with all students.
- At any time parents and students can check the student’s current grades in a course using the online grade portal. Please contact the secondary office for login information.
- Parents are encouraged to initiate conferences with teachers when concerns exist. Teachers will periodically initiate teaching team conferences with parents if there is a need.

**TESTING**

*At Meridian School we believe that standardized testing is helpful in providing a summative picture of a child's learning but will not dictate the way we teach.*

- STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)/End of the Course Tests will be taken as required by the Texas Education Agency. This test is a criterion-based exam measuring a student’s knowledge against a set standard.
- Meridian School is responsible for teaching the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as contained in 19 TAC Chapters 110-128 and participates in the statewide assessment program, to ensure accountability for student achievement. This includes administration of the TPRI (Texas Primary Reading Inventory) in grades K, 1, and 2, the TELPAS assessment for students with English as their second language, and other state required tests.
- In addition to the STAAR test, Meridian School may administer a test which measures students against a national norm.
- In order to prepare for college admissions and the SAT and/or ACT exams, the 10th grade students will take the PSAT and ACT Plan. When taken again in 11th grade, the PSAT is used to determine awards for National Merit Scholarship. In 11th grade juniors also take the ACT.
- Students enrolled in IB Diploma Program courses will take IB exams for those courses at the end of the 12th grade year. Grades on the IB exams are used to determine whether or not a student is awarded the IB Diploma. Furthermore, colleges often award credit for college courses based upon IB exam grades.

**AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES**

*At Meridian School we believe that students need relevant, authentic experiences integrated into the curriculum to prepare them for the future. We want to bring the world into the classroom and take the classroom out into the world.*

Off-Campus trips, guest speakers, primary sources, role playing and experiments are all examples of authentic, relevant experiences that will be valued and encouraged by all members of our community. Parents will be asked to support of these activities.

**PRIMARY**: Students will experience off-campus learning opportunities in designated grade levels (currently 2nd, 4th, and 5th). These will be tied to instruction within the PYP Planners. Experiences may vary each year, but will revolve around one of the planner themes. Students will be transported on school or charter buses, dependent upon the length of the trip. Students will be

Meridian School Parent/Student Handbook & Code of Conduct
accompanied by Meridian faculty and staff. Dates and information will be communicated to parents in advance of the trip. Cost per student will be based upon factors such as transportation and admission costs, and consideration for fee reductions will be given to students in financial need, such as qualification for Free or Reduced lunch programs.

**SECONDARY:** Students will experience off-campus learning experiences in designated grade levels (currently 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th) and experiences will be directly related to class instruction. Students in 6th grade will experience a learning opportunity connected to MYP study similar to Primary students but of longer duration. The 8th grade class trip will center around service, and has traditionally gone to Heifer Ranch in Arkansas. The 10th grade class trip will center around preparation for college and has traditionally gone to Dallas to investigate area universities and an IB College Fair. The 12th grade class trip will center around broadening students’ experiences, and will generally be to another country. Students will be accompanied by Meridian faculty and staff. Dates and information will be communicated to parents in advance of the trip. Cost per student will be based upon factors such as transportation and admission costs, and consideration for fee reductions will be given to students in financial need, such as qualification for Free or Reduced lunch programs.

**HOMEWORK**

*At Meridian School, we believe that homework should be thoughtful, purposeful, and age-appropriate in both content and time. We strive to promote the trait of the balanced learner in this regard.*

In **Primary** grades, teachers will use homework to make connections between Meridian’s instructional program and the home. Rather than sending packets of worksheets, teachers will send home a list of activities and options once per week. Parents may then choose when to complete the activities, working around the family’s schedule. Activities will include reading and math centered around our curriculum, and other activities tied to the grade level’s current I.B. planner. **Homework is considered a vital piece in a primary students’ learning. It is an expectation that Primary families support homework requirements and academic consequences may be given for non-completion.**

Homework for **Secondary** students is communicated individually by subject specific teacher and due dates are not necessarily weekly. A homework assignment that prepares students for skills or information that are intrinsic to the next class day’s lesson will generally be due that next class, while projects might have due dates that extend several weeks. It is important that as students continue to develop, they establish skills of recording their homework and managing their time. Students should record assignments and due dates in a daily planner. ManageBac is an additional resource to consult for homework assignments (consult mwschool.org or contact the middle or high school office for login instructions). Homework will be purposeful and the contribution of homework assignments to learning in class should be clear.

**TUTORING**

Primary students are offered tutorials/intervention on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings during Pride Time. Grade level teams will structure Pride Time in a manner that is conducive to their grade level needs. Students will have the opportunity for small group instruction that will focus on pre-teach, reteach or extension activities. Primary Students who did not meet standard on the previous year STAAR test will utilize Pride Time to strengthen their skills as assessed on the state test for academic readiness. Additionally, students who did not meet standard on the STAAR test, may be offered additional tutoring based on availability of resources.

Secondary teachers each have tutorials at least twice a week, either before or after school. Teachers’ tutorial schedule can be found on the Meridian School website under **Academics → Secondary → General Info.** All students who are not achieving to their potential in class are encouraged to seek additional help through tutorials. Additionally, Saturday Opportunity School (SOS) meets every Saturday, providing students with the opportunity to come to complete work, makeup tests, or seek additional help.
SERVICES

At Meridian School we believe that many people and resources are needed to meet the unique needs of every child.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)
Response to Intervention (RTI) supports the work of the campus team of administrators and teachers as they address the needs of struggling learners. Response to Intervention provides a strategic process for early identification as well as the necessary tools for selecting appropriate interventions toward a positive solution for the student and teacher. The team assists with:

- Establishing a comprehensive campus-based process for identifying students who are struggling in the classroom (either academically or behaviorally)
- Developing and implementing early intervention services which address the learning needs of students
- Supporting a response to intervention process for early identification of students with learning differences
- Identifying specific research-based strategies to meet the diverse needs of students in the classroom to prevent unnecessary referral to special education. Provide coordinated early intervening services to struggling students, as described in NCLB and IDEA 2004.

SPECIAL EDUCATION
In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Special Education services at Meridian School include instructional and related services specifically designed to meet the individual, educational needs of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Please refer to the Procedural Safeguards provided by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) at: http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/explansaf/

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

For more information on admission into Meridian special education programs or section 504 services, please see “Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services” in the appendix.

SECTION 504 / DYSLEXIA
Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

For more information on admission into Meridian special education programs or section 504 services, please see “Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services” in the appendix.

GIFTED & TALENTED
Meridian School does not identify students as “gifted and talented” and does not receive funds for gifted students. All students’ needs are addressed through a differentiated curriculum – which includes our high achieving students. Therefore, there is no pull-out program for gifted and talented students because the IB program focus is on the whole child and the curriculum is designed to meet these needs. The IB curriculum structure is recognized by the state of Texas as being appropriate for the gifted learner. Attend school information nights or contact the office or your child’s teacher for specific information.
**ENGLISH LEARNERS (EL)**
Meridian School provides services for students identified as English Learners as indicated through the Home Language Survey, district assessments, and norm-referenced assessments.

**COUNSELING**
Meridian employs counselors for both primary and secondary.

Meridian Primary School has two counselors. The primary counselors will provide both in-classroom lessons to students, and individual or small group counseling as scheduling allows. The school counselors do not provide parents or family counseling but can assist families with finding resources and information.

The Secondary School has middle and high school counselors who provide academic and social counseling, as well as a college counselor.

**TUTORING**
See the ‘Academics’ section of this handbook.
HEALTH

At Meridian School, we believe that the emotional and physical needs of our students must be well taken care of before learning can occur.

Meridian School employs two full-time school nurses (RN and LVN) on-site. Please contact the nurse at the appropriate campus for more information. (See Contacts list on Page 8.)

Parents are asked to keep the School Nurse and classroom teachers fully informed of significant changes to their child’s health in order to enable us to take the best possible care of each student.

MEDICATION

When students must take medication at school, either by a physician’s order (prescription medication) or by parent or guardian request (non-prescription medication,) the following procedures must be observed:

1. Medication must be delivered to the School Nurse (or designee) by parent or guardian in the original prescription bottle or over-the-counter container. Students are not allowed to bring medication to school (including cough drops).
2. A Meridian School Medication Consent Form must be completed and signed by the parent or guardian prior to dispensing any medication, either prescription or non-prescription. A new form is required each school year. No medication will be dispensed without parent or guardian consent.
3. The prescription label must have the student’s name, current date, name of medication, dosage and the time to be given.
4. If dosages should change while the child is on prescription medication, such changes need to be provided to the School Nurse (or designee) from the doctor and a new prescription bottle must be provided with the changes listed. A new consent form must be completed prior to the new dose being administered. Changes will be made with a doctor’s authorization only.
5. The dosage of non-prescription medication must be within the manufacturer’s recommendation as printed on the label. Non-prescription medication on an as needed basis can be given for up to two (2) weeks.
6. Students may not carry prescription or non-prescription medicine to administer to themselves without a doctor’s order on file in the Nurse’s Office/Clinic. This order must specify that the medication can be carried by the student. This determination is made by the physician, taking into account student maturity level, level of understanding of self-administration, and instruction by the school nurse. The medication is to be properly labeled with the pharmacy label. **The sharing of any medication between students is strictly prohibited.** This includes vitamins and health supplements. Inhalers, Epi Pens, and diabetic supplies may be carried by the students with parental consent and a doctor’s order. Medicines brought to the School and not meeting necessary requirements will not be dispensed by any school employee and will be kept in the Clinic until a parent or guardian verifies the medicine in written form and follows the procedure or takes it home.
7. **Primary and Middle School Students:** Only teachers may keep and administer medication on field trips. A separate “one day only” medication form must be filled out in order for medications to be administered on field trips. **High School Students:** With proper documentation, high school students may self carry and self administer medications on field trips.

Parents must pick up all medications at the end of the school year, or they will be discarded. Parents must initial the consent form when picking up medication.

ILLNESS AND INJURIES

Parents are asked to keep their child at home if that student has any communicable illness, is vomiting or if he/she is running a fever of 100° F or higher. Students should be fever and vomit free without fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours before returning to school. Parents must notify the Administration Office in the event their child/children will be absent due to illness (Refer to ‘Attendance’ section of handbook for further instructions).

The school will contact parents directly in the event of any serious injuries or medical emergencies. Please ensure that the School is kept informed of any changes of contact telephone numbers so that this service remains efficient. If your child needs emergency medical help, the School uses the services of Williamson County Emergency Medical Services. All teaching and administrative staff will have records of emergency medical conditions for students.
With young children, it is very helpful to keep in close contact with the School Nurse and classroom teachers about any health problems your child has however slight they may seem. Even small health concerns can affect a student’s behavior or performance at this age, and it is helpful to us to be aware of any background information, which may help us to better serve your child.

In the event of a confirmed, contagious, reportable disease, a letter of notification will be sent to the student’s classroom parents. Parents should notify the school nurse of any confirmed, contagious diseases, including flu and strep throat, chicken pox, staph, impetigo, pink eye, giardia, and salmonella.

Doctors Note to Excuse from P.E. – If a student is ill or injured, a parent must provide a note to excuse their student from participation in physical education. After three consecutive days, a doctor’s note is required with a date noted for return to participation.

**Allergies**
Due to the serious and potentially life threatening situations that can arise due to Asthma and Allergies (including food allergies), it is crucial that the School Nurse be notified of these conditions. Please refer to the paragraph on ‘Medication’ found in this section of the handbook for specific instructions should medications be necessary.

Senate Bill 27 of the 82th Legislative Session of 2011 established guidelines for the care of students with food allergies who are at risk for anaphylaxis. The commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) in consultation with the SB-27 Ad-Hoc Committee developed guidelines for use by school districts and charter schools. Due to the commitment of Meridian School and its governing body with regard to student health and wellness, policy guidelines have been developed based on SB27 and the DSHS guidelines. These guidelines are available in the Appendix.

**Nuisance Diseases**
“Nuisance Diseases,” such as scabies, head lice (pediculosis), ringworm of the scalp and impetigo are contagious and can cause problems in the school setting. Students known to have live head lice will need to be picked up from school. The child may return to school after being treated with a valid lice treatment. The student must report to the school nurse prior to returning to class. Letters will be sent home to notify parents if a student in the classroom is verified as having live lice. Parents should contact the school nurse if their child has had active, live head lice. All communication regarding head lice will be kept strictly confidential.

**Immunizations**
Immunizations are an important part of public health. Texas law requires students to be immunized against certain vaccine-preventable diseases. In order for your student to attend school, all required immunizations must be obtained or a valid exemption must be on file. Information about required immunizations for students can be obtained in the Meridian School Nurse’s Office. Students non-compliant with vaccines or those having invalid exemptions will be excluded from School per law. Below is a list of resources to help you obtain vaccines or answer questions.

- Meridian School Administration
- Williamson County and Cities Health District (512-943-3600)
- Immunize Texas
- 2-1-1 Texas - Three digit toll free number for health and social services information

Any student coming into School to register must be cleared through the Administration Office for compliance with state immunization requirements for school children. Some 30 day provisional enrollment will be granted but ONLY if certain requirements are met. Students who have already registered and are delinquent on required vaccines must obtain needed vaccines and be cleared by the School Administration prior to starting classes. Texas State Law states that all required immunizations be physician or Health Department verified. Month, date and year for each shot must be indicated. For children needing medical exemptions from immunization requirements, a written statement by the physician must be submitted at the time of registration. For children receiving exemption for reasons of conscience, Meridian School requires an original Texas Department of Health affidavit form notarized and submitted at the time of registration. These forms are valid for two years and must be renewed in a timely manner if the exemption is to continue. No other forms or reproductions will be allowed. For more information about immunization requirements and exemptions, including instructions on how to submit an exemption request to the Texas Department of Health, visit the TDH site: [www.immunizeTexas.org](http://www.immunizeTexas.org).
**FOOD SERVICES & NUTRITION**

At Meridian School we recognize that wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being and readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that promote student achievement and overall quality of life.

Meridian’s intention is to promote this Food Policy to all school faculty and staff, parents and students. Why is it important to have all constituents involved with the policy? It is important because successful implementation of this policy requires cooperation from everyone in the school. The goal is to provide a healthy, consistent message to students throughout the school environment, not just in the cafeteria.

**FOOD PROVIDED TO STUDENTS BY THE SCHOOL**

**Food Served in the School Cafeteria**

In addition to following the guidelines set forth by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and Texas Department of Agriculture’s Child Nutrition Program, Meridian is actively working to ensure that meals served in the school cafeteria meet or exceed health guidelines for all students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FMNV</strong></th>
<th>FMNV are Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value as defined by the US Department of Agriculture and Texas Department of Agriculture. These type foods will not be served to students in the cafeteria. Food items served and sold in the school cafeteria shall to the extent possible be prepared from fresh ingredients.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VENDING MACHINES</strong></td>
<td>Meridian School will not have vending machines on its campuses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRIED FOOD</strong></td>
<td>Foods that have been deep fat fried, pre-fried, flash-fried or par-fried will not be served to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRUIT/VEGETABLES</strong></td>
<td>Must be offered daily on all points of service and be fresh whenever possible. Frozen or canned fruits will be packaged in natural juice or water whenever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BEVERAGES</strong></td>
<td>Meridian School will serve only unflavored white milk, unflavored water or 100% juice. Please note, however, that although 100% juices may be a source of vitamins, current research recommends limiting juice consumption due to its high sugar content. Electrolyte replacement beverages (sports drinks) or carbonated sugary beverages will not be served or sold to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NON-FOOD INGREDIENTS</strong></td>
<td>In the school cafeteria, Meridian students will not be served foods containing any non-food ingredients. These ingredients include but are not limited to: artificial food colorings, artificial flavors, and artificial fats (trans-fats).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOODS USED FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES</strong></td>
<td>Lesson plans for instructional use of foods shall be submitted to the campus administrator for permission in advance of all food preparation. In the event that a learning opportunity in the classroom involves food or the preparation of food, school staff will appropriately accommodate the needs of students with specific allergies so that all may fully participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRIPLE A PROGRAM FOODS</strong></td>
<td>Food will be served in accordance with this policy. No FMNV are allowed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Closed Campus**

Meridian School will maintain a closed campus at lunch for all grade levels.

**Competitive Foods**

Competitive Foods are defined as any food and/or beverage sold or made available to students that are not defined in the chart above. They are called competitive foods because they compete with these foods. Parents and children may not think of them as competitive foods; they may think of these foods are “snacks and drinks” consumed outside of the regular meals provided by the
school. These foods will not be allowed for sale in the cafeteria or as a part of the after-school program.

Foods and beverages provided during field trips, school events or as part of fundraisers should follow these guidelines, however it may be reasonable to deviate from these standards on limited and specific occasions with the prior approval of the school administration.

This also includes foods provided by parents from home for student lunches and snacks. School fundraisers include food sold by school administrators or staff (principals, coaches, teachers, etc.), students or student groups, parents or parent groups, or any other person, company or organization.

The school may allow alternative meals to be sold to students in competition with meals made available by the school food service department (i.e., food sold for fundraising purposes) up to three times per year, as allowed by the State.

**FOOD PROVIDED TO STUDENTS FROM PARENTS**

**Lunches and Snacks Brought from Home**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LUNCHES BROUGHT FROM HOME</th>
<th>It is strongly recommended that lunches brought from home not contain “junk foods” or high sugar “dessert” items. If these items must be sent in a student’s lunch, these types of items should be limited to very small portions so as not to detract from the child eating the healthier portions of the meal. Students will not be allowed to bring carbonated beverages (sodas) with their meals.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SNACKS BROUGHT FROM HOME</td>
<td>It is strongly recommended that these be healthy snacks. They should be in single-size servings and not include items with high sugar content. Also, because students often continue working on classroom assignments while having their daily snack, it is requested that “messy” snacks be avoided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAST FOOD</td>
<td>Parents and relatives are strongly discouraged from bringing “fast food” products in for students during school hours, especially those that contain foods of minimal nutritional value. Meridian understands, however, that there may be extenuating circumstances. In these cases, fast food brought to school will be removed from the original packaging and placed into a lunch bag or sack at the school office before being delivered to the student. Parents will not be allowed to bring carbonated beverages (sodas) with their meals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BLANKET POLICY STATEMENT ON FOOD PROVIDED TO STUDENTS BY PARENTS**

In addition to the no food policy for student birthdays, NO FOOD of any kind should be sent to school to be handed out to students in the classroom AT ANY TIME. This includes any kind of miscellaneous celebration or holidays not being celebrated as a school-wide event. Foods sent from home for this purpose will not be distributed and will be returned.

**PRIMARY:**

**Birthday Parties**

Birthday parties will not be held at Meridian. Teachers will recognize/celebrate student birthdays as they see fit for their individual classrooms. NO FOOD, ‘sweet treats,’ candy or beverage items, of any kind, should be brought into the school as part of student birthday celebrations. Foods sent from home for this purpose will not be distributed and will be returned. This is done in consideration of all children, including those that have food sensitivities. Meridian greatly appreciates parent/guardian cooperation in our efforts to protect all students’ well-being.

Understanding that children enjoy having birthday recognition, and in accordance with the IB profile attributes of respect and caring, we ask that our parents consider alternatives such as the following:

- Let your child choose a book to donate to the school library or to his/her classroom; dress it nicely in a fun birthday gift bag and have your child carry it proudly to school on his/her special day.
- Hand out non-food and non-candy treats, such as pencils, fun erasers, stickers, little games, etc.
- Donate needed “wish list” items to your classroom (ask your teacher what is needed) or to one of the specials classrooms (like a new soccer ball for wellness, watercolor sets for art class or a Spanish book for Spanish class, etc.)
- Donate recess equipment (ask your teacher in advance if there is a need for this).
- Make a financial donation to the school in your child’s name
- PLEASE do not send flower arrangements or balloons to the classroom as they are active and crowded areas. If
received, these will be held in the office for your child to take at dismissal.

**Allowed FMNV Events**

Meridian is allowed three specific dates on which students may be served FMNV foods. Meridian has three approved times: Winter Holiday Event, Mid-Winter Event, and End-of-School Event. These classroom events should focus on activities and camaraderie rather than food. Students will be allowed to have one sweet treat, as well as other appropriate and healthy foods. Parents may be asked to assist the teacher with bringing in foods, and all will be coordinated in advance through designated parent classroom contacts. Other foods can include fruits and vegetables, low sugar snacks, baked vs. fried items, and overall healthy foods.

No candy is allowed in the classroom; this includes Valentine’s Day. No candy should be attached to Valentine’s cards exchanged by the students. Parents/Students must follow all classroom policies with regard to the exchange of Valentine’s cards, party invitations, etc.

**SECONDARY**

Secondary School does not have classroom parties in the same sense as Primary, though there may be curriculum-related opportunities for food in the classroom, such as students ordering food at a simulated bistro in French class. On special occasions after school clubs might have food at meetings, such as World Languages club celebrating 16 Septiembre. In all such cases, a note will be sent home informing parents of the food choices notifying parents so that they can express concerns regarding any food allergies or dietary restrictions.

**Food Allergy Guidelines**

The health and safety of Meridian students is a top priority. Meridian will not only work diligently to accommodate food allergies, but will also teach students how to advocate for themselves and function in a communal eating environment. Students without food allergies will also receive the education and opportunities necessary to help facilitate the safety of their classmates and community.

**General Guidelines**

- Learning opportunities that include the preparation of food will accommodate the specific allergies of those children in the classroom so that all may fully participate.
- In accordance with Texas state policy, parents may not distribute food to other people’s children at any time.
- Sharing of food among the primary students is prohibited.
- Secondary students should know that sharing of food is at their own discretion and they are responsible for being aware of their personal dietary limitations.
- Meridian School will work with individual students with food allergies and their parents to create individual allergy management plans. However, the cafeteria will NOT be a nut free zone.

**Food Allergens Including PEANUT / NUT Products**

Meridian recognizes the vulnerability of children with anaphylactic food allergies. Please reference the Appendix, Food Allergen Policy Guidelines.

**WATER POLICY**

Meridian recognizes that water intake is important to health, especially in the Texas heat. For this reason, students will have regular access to fresh drinking water throughout the day. If they desire, students may bring a capped container of drinking water from home for consumption in the classroom and on the playground (please label with their first and last name!). Because Meridian has a commitment to responsible environmental practices, we will promote a Bottle-Free Campus where students are encouraged to use only reusable water containers rather than disposable plastic water bottles.

Also see ‘Health’ section of this handbook.
STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

At Meridian School, we believe in a proactive philosophy of intrinsic motivation, focusing on student strengths, collaboration, and communication.

Meridian School promotes integrity, truth, knowledge, trust, discipline and respect in a safe learning and teaching environment.

The Code of Conduct serves all students, parents, teachers and administrators, each of whom has the right to a safe and productive environment. With this right comes the individual responsibility and accountability for maintaining this environment.

The underlying goal of a code of conduct is that students develop the skills and attitudes to become contributing members of the school community. At Meridian School we will endeavor to build an environment that actively involves community members.

PURPOSE
The Student Code of Conduct is Meridian School’s response to the requirements of the Texas Education Code. The law requires Meridian School to define misconduct that may – or must – result in a range of specific disciplinary consequences including suspension or expulsion from school.

Meridian School’s Governing Board adopts the Student Code of Conduct as policy; therefore, in case of conflict between the Code and the Student Handbook, the Code will prevail.

STANDARD OF STUDENT CONDUCT

At Meridian School, we believe that if we can teach students these attributes of respect and responsibility, along with an invigorating and rigorous curriculum, that each one will be inspired to succeed.

Learner Profile
Meridian School fosters the attributes of the IB Learner Profile in students. This is central to Meridian School education and culture. For more detail on the Learner Profile, please see “Meridian School Culture and Climate” at the beginning of this handbook.

Academic Honesty
All students are expected to be principled in regards to academic and non-academic contexts.

We expect students to have integrity with their work. We will not tolerate any form of plagiarism, including downloading and using information from the internet without citing sources. Violations will result in disciplinary consequences in accordance with the provisions of the Code.

A detailed Academic Honesty policy for secondary students can be found in the Secondary Academic Program of Studies (click here for a link to its location on the Meridian School website: Secondary Academic Program of Studies).

Public Display of Affection
In order to maintain a school in which distractions are minimized and all students’ benefit from a safe, respectful learning environment, students should refrain from inappropriate, intimate behaviors on campus or at school-sponsored events.

SCHOOL’S AUTHORITY AND JURISDICTION

School rules and the authority of Meridian School to administer discipline apply whenever the interest of the School is involved, on
or off School grounds, in conjunction with or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities.

Meridian School has disciplinary authority over a student:

1. During the regular school day;
2. While the student is in attendance at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
3. For any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location;
4. Cyberbullying or electronic media harassment between two Meridian students, regardless of time or location;
5. When retaliation against a School employee or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
6. When criminal mischief is committed on or off school property or at a school-related event;
7. For certain offenses committed within 300 feet of school property;
8. When the student commits a felony, as provided by Texas Education Code 37.006 or 37.0081.

Meridian School has the right to search a vehicle driven to school by a student and parked on school property whenever there is reasonable cause to believe it contains articles or materials prohibited by Meridian School.

Meridian School has the right to search a student’s locker, purse, package or any other container when there is reasonable cause to believe that it contains articles or materials prohibited by Meridian School.

School administrators will report crimes as required by law and will call local law enforcement when an administrator suspects that a crime has been committed on campus.

Meridian School has the right to expel a student for violating Meridian School’s Code of Conduct.

**GENERAL CONDUCT VIOLATIONS**

Meridian School prohibits the following:

**Disregard for Authority**
- Failing to immediately comply with directives given by school personnel (insubordination)
- Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission
- Refusing to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or principal

**Mistreatment of Others**
- Using profanity, vulgar language, making obscene gestures, and/or making racial slurs towards others
- Fighting or scuffling (for assault see Expulsion)
- Threatening another student or School employee on or off school property
- Engaging in physical, verbal, or cyber bullying or social alienation (see below for elaboration)
- Engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether by word, gesture, or any other conduct, including requests for sexual favors directed toward another student or a district employee
- Hazing (see glossary)
- Causing an individual to act through the use of a threat of force (coercion)
- Committing extortion or blackmail (obtaining money or an object of value from an unwilling person)
- Engaging in inappropriate verbal, physical or sexual conduct directed toward another student or a district employee
Bullying

At Meridian School, we believe that bullying is a serious offense that can lead to severe long-term problems for individuals and communities. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated at Meridian.

Texas Education Code Section 37.0832 defines bullying as “a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct...that:
- has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or of damage to the student’s property;
- is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
- materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
- infringes on the rights of the victim at school.”

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying, and is defined as “bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an internet website, or any other internet-based communication tool.”

Forms of Bullying are as follows, but are not limited to:

PHYSICAL AGGRESSION
- Pushing
- Shoving
- Spitting
- Kicking
- Hitting
- Giving dirty looks
- Threatening with a weapon
- Defacing property
- Stealing

VERBAL/Written AGGRESSION
- Mocking
- Name-calling
- Teasing
- Intimidating telephone calls/electronic or written communication
- Racist, sexist or homophobic taunting
- Daring another to do something dangerous
- Verbal or written threats against property
- Verbal or written threats of violence or inflicting bodily harm
- Coercion
- Extortion

SOCIAL ALIENATION
- Gossiping
- Embarrassing
- Setting up a student to look foolish
- Spreading rumors
- Excluding from group
- Inciting hatred
- Racist, sexist or homophobic alienation
● Setting up someone to take the blame
● Public humiliation
● Malicious rumor spreading

CYBERBULLYING
● Cyberbullying off campus still is considered a school disciplinary offense if it interferes with a student’s educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Property Offenses
● Damaging or vandalizing property, including destruction of data, owned by others (for felony criminal mischief see ‘Expulsion’)
● Defacing or damaging school property – including textbooks, lockers, furniture and other equipment – with graffiti or by other means
● Stealing from students, staff or the school
● Committing or assisting in a robbery or theft even if it does not constitute a felony according to the Texas Penal Code (for felony robbery and theft see ‘Expulsion’)

Possession of Prohibited Items
Possessing or using:
● fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device
● a razor, box cutter, chain or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person
● a “look-alike” weapon, air gun, BB gun or stun gun
● ammunition
● knives of any sort
  o Note that while knives of any sort are prohibited on campus property, carrying a knife with a blade of 5 ½ inches in length or greater is subject to mandatory expulsion, per Texas Penal Code 46.02.
● mace or pepper spray
● pornographic material
● tobacco products, vapes, etc.,
● drug or tobacco paraphernalia
● matches or a lighter
● a laser pointer for other than approved use
● chemicals such as, but not limited to, gasoline, acid, and lighter fluid.

Telecommunications Devices
Any devices with texting and calling capabilities fall under the definition of “cell phones” in Meridian School policy. This includes, but is not limited to “smart phones” and “smart watches”.

Students are allowed to have cell phones at Meridian School with the following restrictions:
● Primary and middle school students must keep cell phones in their backpacks unless they have the approval of their teacher.
● High School students may carry cell phones. They may use them before school, after school, and during lunch. They may not use them as cameras or to videotape. All other times during the instructional day require the permission of the teacher.
● Students may not use cell phones as cameras to audio or video at Meridian, unless authorized by a teacher or administrator. Due to the concern for inappropriate use of photographs on social media sites, this is strictly regulated. Violations will be considered a disciplinary infraction as discussed in the Meridian Code of Conduct.

Audio / Visual Recording and Photographs
Meridian School does not allow the recording of conversations or meetings with teachers or staff without prior consent of all parties. This pertains to students as well as staff and parents. If all parties consent, the recording should begin with a record of that consent with stated approval by each party. No person will be allowed to audio or video record in any learning environment without the teacher’s and/or administrator’s permission. Parents and students may not photograph other students in the school without teacher or administrator permission.
Over-the-Counter, Prescription and Illegal Drugs

- Possessing, using, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or inhalants at school, or at a school related function.
- Possessing or selling seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount
- Possessing, using, giving or selling paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance (see glossary for “paraphernalia”)
- Possessing or selling look alike drugs or items attempted to be passed off as drugs or contraband
- Abusing the student’s own prescription drug, selling or giving a prescription drug to another student or possessing or being under the influence of another person’s prescription drug on school property or at a school related event
- Having or taking prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs, including vitamins and health supplements, at school other than as provided by the Parent-Student Handbook
- Possessing, using or being under the influence of alcohol at school, or at a school related function.

K-9 Dog Visits to Meridian Campus (Drug Search Dogs)
Meridian School, in cooperation with the Round Rock Police Department (RRPD), will schedule unannounced visits of RRPD’s drug search K-9 dogs. The dogs will potentially sniff search the following areas to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs, vaping products, and alcohol. Hallways, common areas, classrooms, office areas, lockers, as well as outdoor areas including staff/student vehicles in the parking lot areas. Searches of classrooms, common areas or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. An item in a classroom, a locker or a vehicle to which a trained dog alerts will be searched by school officials. In the event that a K-9 alerts to a specific area--such as a locker, for example--the school reserves the right to search that area more closely and issue appropriate school consequences if prohibited substances are found. Questions about this can be directed to any secondary assistant principal.

Misuse of Computers and the Internet
(also see Parent and Student Handbook – Appendix A - Acceptable Use Policy)

- Violating technology use policies, rules or agreements signed by the student and/or agreements signed by the student’s parent
- Using the internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees or cause disruption to the educational program
- Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, or damaging to another’s reputation
- Distributing “Spam” Emails (see below).

Disciplinary Response to “Spam” Emails
Students must uphold the Acceptable Use Policy when using technology, and may not harass their peers through “Spam” electronic communications, which include the following behaviors with email or other electronic communication:

- Communicate to multiple peers (more than 10) with non-academic content
- Communicate with any number of peers frequently with non-academic content
- Communicate to any number of peers with obscene or inappropriate content

Should a student receive spam emails or electronic communications, they are advised to contact their assistant principal.

Vandalism and Damage to School Property / Equipment
Damaging school property or equipment will not be tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and may be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.
Safety
- Using e-mail or Web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety
- Engaging in verbal (oral or written) exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee or school property
- Making false accusations or perpetrating hoaxes regarding school safety
- Engaging in any conduct that school officials might reasonably believe will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence
- Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage
- Discharging a fire extinguisher without valid cause
- Triggering a fire alarm without valid cause

Excessive Absenteeism and Truancy
- Excessive absenteeism, such as missing 9 or more days of school for unexcused reasons
- Leaving school without properly checking out

Miscellaneous Offenses
- Violating uniform standards and dress code as communicated in the Parent and Student Handbook
- Academic dishonesty such as cheating or copying the work of another
- Gambling
- Falsifying records, passes or other school-related documents
- Engaging in actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities
- Repeatedly violating other communicated campus or classroom standards of conduct
- Forgery

Meridian School may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Code. These rules may be posted in classrooms or given to the student and may or may not constitute violations of the Code.

**DISCIPLINE**

At Meridian School, we believe that the classroom is a community where...
- Discipline means ‘learning’, therefore disciplinary actions will provide opportunities for growth.
- Behavior is guided through an understanding of intrinsic motivation, not rewards and punishments.
- Character building is addressed deliberately through modeling, direct instruction, and consistent follow through and the Instruction of the Learner Profile Attributes (p.1).
- Techniques of conflict resolution and reparations are used to promote responsibility.
- Community building curricula are used to create inspiring learning environments.
- Different points of view are explored
- Authentic classroom meetings take place so everyone’s voice is acknowledged
- Students set goals and learn to be reflective
- Teachers guide their students with insight and treat each student as an individual

Roles of the Teacher / Principal
The heart of Meridian School is in the quality of relationships among our students and our teachers, administrators and staff. Discipline issues are inevitable and anticipated on a small and infrequent basis. The role of the teacher in the disciplinary process is to:

1. Know the student
2. Redirect the student as possible with minimal disruption to the learning
3. Communicate concerns to parent
4. Engage the Principal when the learning environment has been compromised. The principal will choose and implement a discipline management technique based on experience with the situation, the teacher and the student.

Discipline will be designed to improve conduct and to encourage students to adhere to their responsibilities as members of the Meridian School community. Disciplinary action will draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a
range of discipline management techniques. Discipline will be correlated to the seriousness of the offense, the student’s age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student’s attitude, the effect of the misconduct on the school environment and statutory requirements. Investigations will be completed thoroughly and as quickly as possible. The school will attempt to interview all relative parties to the disciplinary issue.

Communication of disciplinary actions will happen at several levels depending on where and how the situation is handled. Parents will always be contacted prior to discretionary or mandatory expulsions. Suspensions may occur prior to parental notification; however, a Principal will contact the student’s parent or guardian to arrange immediate pick up from the school.

**Discipline Management Techniques / Consequences**
The following discipline management techniques **may be used** – alone or in combination – for behavior prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct or by campus or classroom rules:

- Verbal (oral or written) correction
- Seating changes within the classroom
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process; the item may be returned only to the parent and/or a nominal fine may be required for the return of the item
- Behavioral contracts with established benchmarks that demonstrate student behavior improvement
- Counseling by teachers, counselors or administrative personnel
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Detention
- Sending the student to the office or other assigned area for short-term removal from class
- Acts of reparation; i.e. making amends for an infraction
- Assignment of school duties
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations
- Penalties identified in individual student organizations; written standards of behavior
- Withdrawal or restriction of privileges
- In School Suspension
- Out of School Suspension
- Expulsion
- Referral to an outside agency or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by Meridian School
- Other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials

**ESCALATING CONSEQUENCES**

**Suspension**

**Process for Suspension**
State law allows a student to be suspended out of school for no more than three school days per behavior violation. A student may receive an in school suspension for a longer period. Before being suspended a student will have an informal conference with the appropriate administrator who shall advise the student of the conduct of which he or she is accused. The student will be given the opportunity to explain the incident before the administrator’s decision is made.

A suspended student will not be eligible to participate in school-sponsored curricular, extracurricular, or social activities from the time of suspension through the last date of suspension. As a further consequence, the administrator has the discretion to add a longer-term suspension from school-sponsored extracurricular activities after the in school or out of school suspension is completed.

Parents will be notified upon a student’s suspension and for an out of school suspension they **must immediately pick up the student from school.**

**Reasons for Suspension**
Students may be suspended for any behavior listed in the Code as a general conduct violation or expellable offense.
Suspension Consideration
In deciding whether to order suspension, Meridian School will take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see glossary)
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct, and
3. The student’s disciplinary history

Offenses Resulting in Out of School Suspension Combined with Long-Term Suspension from Extracurricular and Social Activities

There are certain serious offenses that may result in expulsion from Meridian, but if not will automatically result in a three day Out of School Suspension followed by a long-term suspension (two weeks minimum) from school-sponsored out of school / off campus curricular, extracurricular, and social activities. Such offenses, committed within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or involving Meridian School include:

- assault;
- false alarm or report;
- terrorist threat;
- selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, marijuana, a controlled substance or an abusable volatile chemical;
- engaging in public lewdness or indecent exposure;
- retaliation on or off campus against a school employee.

Disciplinary Appeals
A parent may appeal disciplinary decisions of Meridian School teachers or administration (with the exception of expulsion) by following the appropriate steps as outlined in “Resolution for Conflict and Concerns”. The appeals process for expulsion is detailed in the section below entitled “Appeal to the Governing Board.”:

Expulsion
If a student commits an expellable offense, as outlined in the student code of conduct, charter administrators may expel the student only after due process has been afforded the student, and the Head of School has determined that expulsion is the appropriate consequence. The charter holder shall notify the school district in which the student resides within three (3) business days of any action expelling or withdrawing a student from the charter school.

There are two types of expulsion: discretionary and mandatory.

Discretionary Expulsion

Reasons for Discretionary Expulsion
A student may be expelled for the following conduct on school property:

- Engaging in serious offenses or persistent misbehavior (see glossary)
- Disciplinary infractions that violate Meridian School’s Code while under Behavior Contract
- Criminal mischief
- Disruptive activities (Disorderly Conduct or Assault)
- Disruption of classes
- False reporting (bomb threats, fire alarms, etc.)
- Theft
- Weapons and using objects as weapons
- Fighting
- Sexual Harassment
- Title IX Violations
- Possession, use or transmittal of a prohibited substance or drug paraphernalia
● Possession of any fireworks or ammunition
● Criminal trespass
● Threats, extortion or harassment
● Possessing, using or being under the influence of alcohol at school, or at a school related function
● Destruction of School property
● Bullying (see ‘Bullying’ section under ‘General Conduct Violations’)

**Discretionary Expulsion Consideration**

In deciding whether to order expulsion, Meridian School will take into consideration:
1. Self-defense (see glossary)
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct, and
3. The student’s disciplinary history

Before being expelled a student will have an informal conference with the appropriate administrator who shall advise the student of the conduct of which he or she is accused. The student will be given the opportunity to explain the incident before the administrator’s decision is made.

**Expulsion Due Process**

If the principal believes a student has committed an expellable offense, the principal may make the recommendation to the Head of School. Prior to taking any expulsion action, the principal will schedule a hearing before the Head of School and provide written notice to the student and his/her parents of:
1. The reasons for the recommended expulsion; and
2. The date, time and location of a hearing before the Head of School, within three days after the date of the notice, unless the parents and Head of School agree in writing to an alternate time. The notice shall further state that the student is entitled to:
   a. Be present at the hearing;
   b. Have an opportunity to present evidence;
   c. Have an opportunity to examine/question the school’s evidence;
   d. Be accompanied by his/her parents or another adult who can provide guidance to the student and who is not an employee of the district.
3. The notice shall also state that failure to request such a hearing constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter.

**Hearing Before the Head of School**

After providing notice to the student and parent of the hearing, the Head of School shall hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student’s parents or another adult representing the student attends.

At the hearing, the School administration shall be allowed to present its evidence of the alleged violation and documented discipline management techniques attempted to correct the undesired behavior if applicable. The student and/or his parents may present evidence and ask questions of the administrator’s adult witnesses in defense of the allegations.

Within 24 hours of the hearing, the Head of School will notify the student and the student’s parents in writing of his/her decision. The decision shall specify:
1. The length of the expulsion (no less than a school year);
2. The procedures for re-admittance to the school at the end of the expulsion period; and
3. The right to appeal the Head of School’s decision to the governing school board (or its designee).

**Appeal to the Governing Board**

After the due process hearing, the expelled student may request that the board review the expulsion decision. The student or parent must submit a written request to the president of the Governing Board within three days after receipt of the written decision. The Head of School must also be copied on this written request.

If such request is made, the board may designate a committee of the board members to hear the appeal. The Head of School will provide the student or parent with written notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting at which the board (or its designated committee) will review the decision.
The board (or its designated committee) will review the record of the expulsion hearing in a closed meeting. The board may also hear a statement from the student or parent (or representative) and from the school administration.

The board (or its designated committee) will hear statements made by the parties at the review and will base its decision on evidence reflected in the record and any statements made by the parties at the review. Consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of the hearing. The board (or its designated committee) will make and communicate its decision orally at the conclusion of the presentation. The decision of the board (or its designated committee) is final.

During the appeal process, the student will be allowed to complete homework and submit for credit.

**Mandatory Expulsion**

**Reason for Mandatory Expulsion**
A student must be expelled for committing an offense that qualifies as a felony under the Texas Penal Code. (The same due process afforded to students outlined in the Discretionary Expulsion will apply to Mandatory Expulsions.)

**Readmission After Withdrawal or Expulsion**
If a student has been expelled or has withdrawn prior to a final expulsion or disciplinary hearing, the student is not eligible for readmission to the School, unless the following terms are met:

1. The student must have a clean discipline record at their current school for at least one full year;
2. The student must reapply as a new student and adhere to the school’s lottery process (sibling priority will NOT apply to students who have been expelled); and
3. The student must meet with the Re-Admission Committee to present a request for re-admission.

The Re-Admission Committee will be comprised of two teachers and an administrator (appointed by the Head of School), none of whom were directly involved in the original expulsion or withdrawal. The Re-Admission Committee may request current teacher recommendations for the student, relevant commentary from any counselor with whom the student may have consulted, as well as any other documentation pertinent to the application. The student will be allowed to make a statement to support his request and may submit additional documentation to the committee for consideration. A parent or other adult representative may also be present for the presentation to the Committee. Upon consultation of the presentation and after review of all relevant documentation, the Committee will make a recommendation on whether the student should be readmitted. The decision of the Re-admission Committee may only be appealed to the Head of School, whose decision will be final.

The student must re-apply and follow the same process for admission as if he or she were a new applicant. However, if admitted, any subsequent violation of the Student Code of Conduct may result in expulsion without the possibility of readmission.
**Glossary**

The glossary provides legal definitions and locally established definitions and is intended to assist in understanding terms related to the Student Code of Conduct.

**Delinquent conduct** is conduct that violates either state or federal law and is punishable to imprisonment or confinement in jail. It includes conduct that violates certain juvenile court orders, including probation orders, but does not include violations of traffic laws.

**False Alarm or Report** occurs when a person knowingly initiates, communicates or circulates a report of a present, past or future bombing, fire, offense or other emergency that he or she knows is false or baseless and that would ordinarily:

- Cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
- Place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or
- Prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly.

**Harassment** is conduct that threatens to cause harm or bodily injury to another student, is sexually intimidating, causes physical damage to the property of another student, subjects another student to physical confinement or restraint, or maliciously and substantially harms another student’s physical or emotional health or safety.

**Hazing** is an intentional or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in or maintaining membership in an organization.

**Paraphernalia** are devices that can be used for inhaling, ingesting, injecting or otherwise introducing a controlled substance into a human body.

**Persistent misbehavior** is three or more violations of the Code in general or repeated occurrences of the same violation.

**Possession** means to have an item on one’s person or in one’s personal property, including but not limited to clothing, purse or backpack; a private vehicle used for transportation to or from school or school-related activities, including but not limited to an automobile, truck, motorcycle or bicycle; or any other school property used by the student, including but not limited to a locker or desk.

**Reasonable belief** is a determination made by the Administrator or designee using all available information, including the information furnished under Article 15.27 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

**Self-defense** is the use of force against another to the degree a person reasonably believes the force is immediately necessary to protect him or herself.

**Under the influence** means lacking the normal use of mental or physical faculties. Impairment of a person’s physical or mental faculties may be evidenced by a pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior or the presence of physical symptoms of drug or alcohol use. A student “under the influence” need not be legally intoxicated to trigger disciplinary action.
APPENDIX
2021-2022 Calendar

Meridian School Parent/Student Handbook & Code of Conduct
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Student’s PRINTED Last Name   Student’s PRINTED Last Name

MERIDIAN SCHOOL
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES IN THE SCHOOL

In an effort to promote the appropriate use of technology in the classroom and within the broader learning environments, the following procedures will guide the use and access to Meridian School technology systems.

Technology Resources Access
Access to Meridian’s electronic technology resources is a privilege, not a right. All users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of regulations governing use of the technology resources and shall agree to allow monitoring of their use and to comply with all policies, regulations and guidelines.

Noncompliance may result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and other disciplinary action consistent with Meridian policies and the Meridian Parent/Student Handbook. Violations of law may result in disciplinary action by Meridian, in addition to any action taken by law enforcement.

The school’s information technology resources, including Internet access, are provided for educational purposes. Adherence to the following policy is necessary for continued access to the school’s technological resources:

Students must

1. Respect and protect the privacy of others.
   - Use only assigned accounts.
   - Use only his/her flash drive and be responsible for its appropriate content and security.
   - Not view, use, or copy passwords, data, or networks to which they are not authorized.
   - Not distribute private information about others or themselves, this includes, but is not limited to, personal addresses and telephone numbers.
   - Not to use social media on Meridian systems.

2. Respect and protect the integrity, availability, and security of all electronic resources.
   - Observe all network security practices, as posted.
   - Report security risks or violations to a teacher or administrator.
   - Not destroy or damage data, networks, or other resources or storage devices that do not belong to them.
   - Not use any network wall port in any Meridian building; not unplug any network device that is plugged into a network wall port.
   - Not disable or attempt to disable content filtering devices on Meridian’s technology resource system.
   - Not install or attempt to install any software or public domain programs on Meridian computers or technology system without expressed permission from the Meridian IT department
   - Avoid actions that are likely to increase the risk of introducing viruses to the system, such as opening
email messages from unknown senders and loading data from unprotected computers.

3. **Respect and protect the intellectual property of others.**
   - Not infringe copyrights (no making illegal copies of music, games, or movies!).
   - Not plagiarize.

4. **Respect and practice the principles of community.**
   - Not use another person’s user ID/login or personal storage device.
   - Communicate only in ways that are kind and respectful.
   - Report threatening or discomforting materials to a teacher.
   - Not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that violates the school's code of conduct (such as messages that are pornographic, threatening, rude, discriminatory, or meant to harass).
   - Not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that is illegal (such as obscenity, stolen materials, or illegal copies of copyrighted works).
   - Not use the resources to further other acts that are criminal or violate the school's code of conduct.
   - Not send spam, chain letters, or other mass unsolicited mailings.
   - Not buy, sell, advertise, or otherwise conduct business, unless approved as a school project.

**Consequences for Violation.** Violations of these rules may result in disciplinary action, including the loss of a student's privileges to use the school’s information technology resources.

**Supervision and Monitoring.** School and network administrators and their authorized employees monitor the use of information technology resources to help ensure that uses are secure and in conformity with this policy. Administrators reserve the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school's information networks and/or a student’s storage device, including student Google accounts, in order to further the health, safety, discipline, or security of any student or other persons, or to protect property. They may also use this information in disciplinary actions, and will furnish evidence of crime to law enforcement.

**I ACKNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTAND MY OBLIGATIONS:**

_______________________________________  _________________________
Student Signature                            Date

_______________________________________  _________________________
Parent/Guardian’s Signature                  Date

PARENTS, PLEASE DISCUSS THESE RULES WITH YOUR STUDENT TO ENSURE HE OR SHE UNDERSTANDS THEM.

THESE RULES ALSO PROVIDE A GOOD FRAMEWORK FOR YOUR STUDENT'S USE OF COMPUTERS AT HOME, AT LIBRARIES, OR ANYWHERE.


Updated July 2019
POLICY FOR PROHIBITED DISCRIMINATION, RETALIATION AND HARASSMENT

Meridian World School, LLC BOARD POLICY MANUAL

Sec. 1. NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Meridian World School prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. Meridian World School further prohibits retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process.

Sec. 2. GENERAL NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

a) Prohibited Conduct

In this policy, the term “prohibited conduct” includes discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

i. Prohibited Discrimination

Discrimination against a student is defined as conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or on any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the student.

ii. Prohibited Harassment

Prohibited harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student’s race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Affects a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student’s academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities.

Examples of prohibited harassment may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person’s religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes; name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

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iii. Prohibited Gender-Based Harassment

Gender-based harassment includes physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on a student’s gender, the student’s expression of characteristics perceived as stereotypical for the student’s gender, or the student’s failure to conform to stereotypical notions of femininity or masculinity. Gender-based harassment is considered prohibited harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

1. Affects a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student’s academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities.

Examples of gender-based harassment, regardless of the student’s or alleged harasser’s actual or perceived gender, may include offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

iv. Prohibited Retaliation

Meridian World School prohibits retaliation against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment or another student who, in good faith, makes a report, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation.

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

b) False Claims

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a Meridian World School investigation regarding discrimination or harassment is subject to appropriate discipline.

c) Reporting Procedures (Non-Sexual Harassment)

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct or believes that another student has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, Principal, or the appropriate Compliance Coordinator designated by Meridian World School.
Any Meridian World School employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct shall immediately notify the appropriate Compliance Coordinator listed in this policy, and take any other steps required by this policy.

The procedures in this Section 2 will apply to all allegations of prohibited conduct other than allegations of harassment prohibited by Title IX. For allegations of sex-based harassment that, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX (including sexual harassment), see the procedures below at Section 3, Sexual Harassment Prohibited – Title IX Policy.

**d) Definition of Compliance Coordinator**

For the purposes of this policy, Compliance Coordinators are the Title IX Coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and the Rick Fernández or designee.

v. **Title IX Coordinator**

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating Meridian World School’s efforts to comply with its responsibilities under Title IX with respect to discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment. Meridian World School has designated as the following individuals as the Title IX Coordinators: Paige Bender and Stephanie Richardson, 2555 North IH 35, Round Rock, Texas 78664, 512-660-5230, s.richardson@mwschool.org p.bender@mwschool.org

vi. **ADA/Section 504 Coordinator**

Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator. Meridian World School designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended: Anna Brown, Director of Special Education/504, 2555 North IH 35, Round Rock, Texas 78664, 512-660-5230.

vii. **Coordinator for Purposes of Compliance with Other Nondiscrimination Laws**

The following person(s) have been designated to coordinate Meridian World School’s compliance with all other antidiscrimination laws; Paige Bender, Compliance Coordinator, 2555 North IH 35, Round Rock, Texas 78664, 512-660-5230.

e) **Alternate Reporting Procedures**

A student shall not be required to report prohibited conduct to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the
Meridian World School, LLC BOARD POLICY MANUAL
POLICY GROUP 3 – STUDENTS
PROHIBITED DISCRIMINATION, RETALIATION,
AND HARASSMENT PG-3.2

Title IX Coordinator or ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, may be directed to the Rick Fernández or designee. Reports concerning prohibited conduct by the Rick Fernández or designee may be made directly to the Board. If a report is made directly to the Board, the Board shall appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.

f) Timely Reporting

Reports of prohibited conduct shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to promptly report may impair Meridian World School’s ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

g) Notice to Parents

A Meridian World School official or designee shall promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct by a Meridian World School employee or another adult.

h) Investigation

Meridian World School may request, but shall not insist upon, a written report. If a report is made orally, the school official shall reduce the report to written form.

Upon receipt or notice of a report, the appropriate Compliance Coordinator shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the Compliance Coordinator shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation, regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the same or similar allegations is pending.

If appropriate, Meridian World School shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent prohibited conduct during the course of an investigation.

The investigation may be conducted by a Compliance Coordinator or designee, or by a third party designated by Meridian World School, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the Principal shall be involved in or informed of the investigation.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.
CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten school business days from the date of the report. If the investigator determines that additional time is needed to complete a thorough investigation of the complaint and/or issue a report, he or she shall inform the complainant in writing of the necessity to extend the time for investigating or responding and a specific date by which the report will be issued.

The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall be filed with the Compliance Coordinator overseeing the investigation.

j) School Action

If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, Meridian World School shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

Meridian World School may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the conduct did not rise to the level of prohibited or unlawful conduct.

k) Confidentiality

To the greatest extent possible, Meridian World School shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

l) Appeal

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through Board Policy procedures and the Meridian Student/Parent Handbook (Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances), beginning at the appropriate level. A student shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

m) Records Retention

Retention of records shall be in accordance with the applicable schedule published by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Sec. 3. SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROHIBITED – TITLE IX POLICY

a) Definitions for Title IX Terms

i. Actual Knowledge
“Actual knowledge” means notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to Meridian World School’s Title IX Coordinator or any Meridian World School official who has authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of Meridian World School, or to any employee of an elementary and secondary school. Imputation of knowledge based solely on vicarious liability or constructive notice is insufficient to constitute actual knowledge. This standard is not met when the only official of Meridian World School with actual knowledge is the respondent (as that term is defined below). The mere ability or obligation to report sexual harassment or to inform a student about how to report sexual harassment, or having been trained to do so, does not qualify an individual as one who has authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of Meridian World School. “Notice” as used in this definition includes, but is not limited to, a report of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator. 34 C.F.R. 106.30(a).

ii. Complainant

“Complainant” means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. 34 C.F.R. 106.30(a).

iii. Consent

“Consent” is not currently defined by the Title IX regulations, nor do the regulations require Meridian World School to adopt a particular definition of consent with respect to sexual assault. 34 C.F.R. 106.30(a).

iv. Deliberate Indifference Standard

If Meridian World School has actual knowledge of sexual harassment in an education program or activity of Meridian World School against a person in the United States, it must respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. Meridian World School is deliberately indifferent only if its response to sexual harassment is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. 34 C.F.R. 106.44.

v. Education Program or Activity

For purposes of this Title IX policy, “education program or activity” includes locations, events, or circumstances over which Meridian World School exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which sexual harassment occurs. 34 C.F.R. 106.44.

vi. Formal Complaint

“Formal complaint” means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that Meridian World School investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. At the time of filing a formal complaint, a
complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in Meridian World School’s education program or activity. A formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by email, by using the contact information for the Title IX Coordinator provided by Meridian World School, and by any additional method designated by Meridian World School. As used in this definition, the term “document filed by a complainant” means a document or electronic submission (such as by email or through an online portal provided for this purpose by Meridian World School) that contains the complainant’s physical or digital signature, or otherwise indicates that the complainant is the person filing the formal complaint. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not a complainant or otherwise a party to the Title IX formal complaint, and must comply with the requirements of the Title IX formal process, including the informal resolution process. 34 C.F.R. 106.30(a).

vii. Respondent

“Respondent” means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment. 34 C.F.R. 106.30(a).

viii. Sexual Harassment

“Sexual harassment” means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. An employee of Meridian World School conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of Meridian World School on an individual’s participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to Meridian World School’s education program or activity; or

34 C.F.R. 106.30(a).

ix. Supportive Measures

“Supportive measures” means nondisciplinary, nonpunitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to Meridian World School’s education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or Meridian World School’s
educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other similar measures. Meridian World School must maintain as confidential any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair Meridian World School’s ability to provide the supportive measures. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures. 34 C.F.R. 106.30(a).

b) Requirement to Designate Title IX Coordinator

Meridian World School must designate at least one employee as a Title IX Coordinator to coordinate Meridian World School’s efforts to comply with its requirements under Title IX.

e) Notification of Title IX Policy

Meridian World School must notify applicants for admission and employment, students, parents or legal guardians of students, and all professional organizations holding professional agreements with Meridian World School of the name or title, office address, email address, and telephone number of the employee or employees designated as the Title IX Coordinator.

Meridian World School must also notify the individuals noted above that Meridian World School does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education program or activity that it operates, and that it is required under Title IX not to discriminate in such a manner. The notification must also state that the requirement not to discriminate in the education program or activity extends to admission and employment, and that inquiries about the application of Title IX to Meridian World School may be referred to the designated Title IX Coordinator, to the assistant secretary for civil rights of the Department of Education, or both.

34 C.F.R. 106.8(a), (b)(1).

d) Handbook Information and Website Postings

Meridian World School must prominently display the contact information required to be listed for the Title IX Coordinator and the nondiscrimination policy described in “Notification of Title IX Policy,” above, on the Meridian World School website, if any, and in the Employee Handbook and Student/Parent Handbook.

Meridian World School may not use or distribute a publication stating that Meridian World School treats applicants, students, or employees differently on the basis of sex except when such treatment is permitted by Title IX.
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AND HARASSMENT PG-3.2

34 C.F.R. 106.8(b)(2).

e) Reporting Sex Discrimination / Sexual Harassment

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, whether or not the reporting person is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment. Reports may be made in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email through the contact information listed for Meridian World School’s Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person’s verbal or written report. Reports may be made at any time (including during nonbusiness hours) by using the telephone number or email address, or by mail to the office address, listed for the Title IX Coordinator. 34 C.F.R. 106.8(a).

f) Complaint Procedures

Meridian World School must adopt and publish procedures that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by Title IX, and a formal Title IX complaint process that complies with applicable federal regulations.

Meridian World School must provide notice to the individuals identified in Sec. 3(b) above of the school’s procedures and Title IX formal complaint process, including how to report or file a complaint of sex discrimination, how to report or file a formal complaint of sexual harassment, and how Meridian World School will respond.

The requirements of this provision apply only to sex discrimination occurring against a person in the United States.

34 C.F.R. 106.8(c)-(d).

g) Response by Title IX Coordinator

The Title IX Coordinator must promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures, consider the complainant’s wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

i. Required Supportive Measures

Meridian World School’s response must treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures and by following a grievance process that complies with the Title IX regulations (see Process for Formal Title IX Complaint, Sec. 3(h) below) before the
imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent.

34 C.F.R. 106.44(a).

ii. Response to Formal Complaint

In response to a formal complaint, Meridian World School must follow a process that complies with the Title IX regulations (see Process for Formal Title IX Complaint, Sec. 3(h) below).

34 C.F.R. 106.44(b)(1).

iii. Emergency Removals

Meridian World School is not precluded from removing a respondent from its education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that Meridian World School:

1. Undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis;
2. Determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal; and
3. Provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

This may not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

34 C.F.R. 106.44(c).

iv. Administrative Leave

Meridian World School is not prohibited from placing a nonstudent employee respondent on administrative leave during the pendency of a Title IX formal complaint. This does not modify any rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act. 34 C.F.R. 106.44(d).

h) Process for Title IX Formal Complaint

For purposes of addressing formal complaints of sexual harassment, Meridian World School’s process must comply with the requirements listed in this section. Any provisions, rules, or practices other than those required by the Title IX regulations or this policy that Meridian World School adopts as part of its process for handling formal complaints of sexual harassment must apply equally to both parties. 34 C.F.R. 106.45(b).
Meridian World School’s Title IX formal complaint process must:

1. Treat complainants and respondents equally by providing remedies to a complainant where a determination of responsibility for sexual harassment has been made against the respondent, and by following a process that complies with the Title IX regulations before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent. Remedies must be designed to restore or preserve equal access to Meridian World School’s education program or activity. Such remedies may include the same individualized services described as supportive measures; however, remedies need not be nondisciplinary or nonpunitive and need not avoid burdening the respondent.

2. Require an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence—including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence—and provide that credibility determinations may not be based on a person’s status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.

3. Require that any individual designated by Meridian World School as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or any person designated by Meridian World School to facilitate an informal resolution process, not to have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent. Meridian World School must ensure that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process receive training on the definition of sexual harassment, the scope of Meridian World School’s education program or activity, how to conduct an investigation and Title IX formal complaint process (including hearings, appeals, and informal resolution processes, as applicable), and how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias. Meridian World School must ensure that decision-makers receive training on any technology to be used at a live hearing, if any, and on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the complainant’s sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant. Meridian World School must also ensure that investigators receive training on relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence. Any materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process must not rely on sex stereotypes and must promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of sexual harassment.

4. Include a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process.

5. Include reasonably prompt timeframes for concluding the grievance process, including reasonably prompt timeframes for filing and resolving appeals and informal resolution processes if Meridian World School offers informal resolution processes, and a process that allows for the temporary delay of the Title IX formal complaint process or the limited extension of time frames for good cause with written notice to
the complainant and the respondent of the delay or extension and the reasons for the action. Good cause may include considerations such as the absence of a party, a party’s advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.

6. Describe the range of possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies or list the possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies that Meridian World School may implement following any determination of responsibility.

7. State whether the standard of evidence to be used to determine responsibility is the preponderance of the evidence standard or the clear and convincing evidence standard, apply the same standard of evidence for formal complaints against students as for formal complaints against employees, including faculty, and apply the same standard of evidence to all formal complaints of sexual harassment.

8. Include the procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

9. Describe the range of supportive measures available to complainants and respondents.

10. Not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally-recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

34 C.F.R. 106.45(b)(1).

i. Notice of Allegations

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, Meridian World School must provide the following written notice to the parties who are known:

1. Notice of Meridian World School’s Title IX formal complaint process, including any informal resolution process.

2. Notice of the allegations of sexual harassment potentially constituting sexual harassment, including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview. Sufficient details include:

   a. The identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known;
   b. The conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment; and
   c. The date and location of the alleged incident, if known.

The written notice must include a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process. The written notice must inform the parties that they may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney and may inspect and review evidence. The written notice must inform the parties of any provision in Meridian World School’s
Meridian World School, LLC BOARD POLICY MANUAL
POLICY GROUP 3 – STUDENTS
PROHIBITED DISCRIMINATION, RETALIATION, AND HARASSMENT PG-3.2

Code of Conduct that prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the Title IX formal complaint process.

If, in the course of an investigation, Meridian World School decides to investigate allegations about the complainant or respondent that are not included in the notice of allegations, Meridian World School must provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

34 C.F.R. 106.45(b)(2).

ii. Dismissal of Formal Complaint

Meridian World School must investigate the allegations in a formal complaint. If the conduct alleged in the formal complaint would not constitute sexual harassment even if proved, did not occur in Meridian World School’s education program or activity, or did not occur against a person in the United States, then Meridian World School must dismiss the formal complaint with regard to that conduct for purposes of sexual harassment under Title IX; such a dismissal does not preclude action under another provision of Meridian World School’s Code of Conduct.

Meridian World School may dismiss the formal complaint or any allegations therein if, at any time during the investigation or hearing (if applicable):

1. A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein;
2. The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by Meridian World School; or
3. Specific circumstances prevent Meridian World School from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

Upon a dismissal of a formal complaint, Meridian World School must promptly send written notice of the dismissal and reason(s) therefore simultaneously to the parties.

34 C.F.R. 106.45(b)(3).

iii. Consolidation of Formal Complaints

Meridian World School may consolidate formal complaints as to allegations of sexual harassment against more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances. Where a Title IX formal complaint process involves more than one complainant or more than one respondent, references in this section to the singular “party,” “complainant,” or “respondent” include the plural, as applicable. 34 C.F.R. 106.45(b)(4).

iv. Investigating Formal Complaints
When investigating a formal complaint and throughout the Title IX formal complaint process, Meridian World School must:

1. Ensure that the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rest on Meridian World School and not on the parties, provided that Meridian World School cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party’s records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional’s or paraprofessional’s capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless Meridian World School obtains that party’s voluntary, written consent to do so for a Title IX formal complaint. If a party is not an “eligible student,” as defined in the FERPA regulations, Meridian World School must obtain the voluntary, written consent of a “parent,” as defined in the FERPA regulations.

2. Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.

3. Not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence.

4. Provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any Title IX formal complaint proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related or proceeding by the advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, and attorney, and not limit the choice or presence of the advisor for either the complainant or respondent in any meeting or Title IX formal complaint proceeding; however, Meridian World School may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties.

5. Provide, to a party whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings (if applicable), investigative interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

6. Provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which Meridian World School does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation. Prior to completion of the investigative report, Meridian World School must send to each party and the party’s advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least ten days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report. Meridian World School must
make all such evidence subject to the parties’ inspection and review available at any hearing (if applicable) to give each party equal opportunity to refer to such evidence during the hearing, including for purposes of cross-examination.

7. Create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and, at least ten days prior to a hearing (if a hearing is required or otherwise provided) or other time of determination regarding responsibility, send to each party and the party’s advisor, if any, the investigative report in an electronic format or a hard copy, for their review and written response.

34 C.F.R. 106.45(b)(5).

v. Hearings

Meridian World School’s Title IX formal complaint process may, but need not, provide for a hearing. With or without a hearing, after Meridian World School has sent to the investigator report to the parties and before reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the decision maker(s) must afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. With or without a hearing, questions and evidence about the complainant’s sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant’s prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant’s prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. The decision-maker(s) must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant. 34 C.F.R. 106.45(b)(6)(ii).

vi. Determination Regarding Responsibility

The decision-maker(s), who cannot be the same person(s) as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator(s), must issue a written determination regarding responsibility. To reach this determination, Meridian World School must apply the same standard of evidence described at “Process for Title IX Formal Complaint, Sec. 3(h) above. The written determination must include:

1. Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment. 2. A description of the procedural steps taken from receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather other evidence, and hearings held (if any).
3. Findings of fact supporting the determination.
4. Conclusions regarding the application of Meridian World School’s Code of Conduct to the facts.
5. A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions Meridian World School imposes on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to Meridian World School’s education program or activity will be provided by Meridian World School to the complainant.

6. Meridian World School’s procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

Meridian World School must provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously. The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that Meridian World School provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

34 C.F.R. 106.45(b)(7)(i)-(iii).

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies identified in a determination regarding responsibility. 34 C.F.R. 106.45(b)(7)(iv).

vii. Appeals

Meridian World School must offer both parties an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, and from Meridian World School’s dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein, on the following bases:

1. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
2. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination on responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and
3. The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

Meridian World School may offer an appeal equally to both parties on additional bases. As to all appeals,

Meridian World School must:

1. Notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties;
2. Ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator;
3. Ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal complies with standards regarding conflict of interest and bias found in the Title IX regulations (as discussed in “Process for Formal Title IX Complaint,” Sec. 3(h) above);

4. Give both parties a reasonable, equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome;

5. Issue a written decision describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result; and

6. Provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties.

34 C.F.R. 106.45(b)(8).

i) Informal Resolution

Meridian World School may not require as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continuing employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to an investigation and adjudication of formal complaints of sexual harassment consistent with Title IX. Similarly, Meridian World School may not require the parties to participate in an informal resolution process and may not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed. However, at any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, Meridian World School may facilitate an informal resolution process, such as mediation, that does not involve a full investigation and adjudication.

With respect to informal resolution, Meridian World School must provide written notice to the parties disclosing:

1. The allegations;

2. The requirements of the informal resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations, provided, however, that at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint; and

3. Any consequences resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.

Meridian World School also must obtain the parties’ voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.

Meridian World School cannot offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

34 C.F.R. 106.45(b)(9).

j) Recordkeeping
Meridian World School must maintain for a period of seven years records of:

1. Each sexual harassment investigation including any determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, and any remedies provided to the complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to Meridian World School’s education program or activity;
2. Any appeal and the result therefrom;
3. Any informal resolution and the result therefrom; and
4. All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process. Meridian World School must make these training materials publicly available on its website or, if Meridian World School does not maintain a website, Meridian World School must make these materials available upon request for inspection by members of the public.

For each response required under “Response by Title IX Coordinator,” Sec. 3(g) above, Meridian World School must create and maintain for a period of seven years records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment. In each instance, Meridian World School must document the basis for its conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent, and document that it has taken measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to Meridian World School’s education program or activity.

If Meridian World School does not provide a complainant with supportive measures, Meridian World School must document the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. The documentation of certain bases or measures does not limit Meridian World School in the future from providing additional explanations or detailing additional measures taken.

34 C.F.R. 106.45(b)(10).

k) Retaliation Prohibited

Neither Meridian World School nor any other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under Title IX.

Intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for Code of Conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report
or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, constitutes retaliation.

Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the “Process for Formal Title IX Complaint,” Sec. 3(h) above.

The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation prohibited by Title IX.

Charging an individual with a Code of Conduct violation for making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a Title IX formal complaint proceeding does not constitute retaliation prohibited by Title IX provided, however, that a determination regarding responsibility alone is not sufficient to conclude that any party made a materially false statement in bad faith.

34 C.F.R. 106.71(a)-(b).

1) Confidentiality

Meridian World School must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) statute, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, or FERPA regulations, 34 C.F.R. part 99, or as required by law, or to carry out the purposes of the Title IX regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 106, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising thereunder. 34 C.F.R. 106.71(a).

m) Relationship to General Non-Discrimination Policy

The formal complaint investigation and resolution process outlined above in Section 3 applies only to formal complaints alleging sexual harassment under Title IX, but not to complaints alleging sex discrimination that do not constitute sexual harassment. Complaints of sex discrimination that do not constitute sexual harassment may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator and will be handled under Meridian World School’s general process for receiving reports of suspected discrimination and harassment, as outlined in Section 2 above.

Sec. 4. ACCESS TO POLICY

Information regarding this policy shall be distributed annually to Meridian World School employees and distributed to parents and students through the Student Handbook. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the Meridian World School administrative offices.
POLICY GUIDELINES FOR THE CARE OF STUDENTS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

Meridian School
Policy Guidelines for the
Care of Students With Food Allergies

Introduction

Senate Bill 27 of the 82nd Legislative Session of 2011 established guidelines for the care of students with food allergies who are at-risk for anaphylaxis. The commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) in consultation with the SB-27 Ad-Hoc Committee developed guidelines for use by school districts and charter schools. Due to the commitment of Meridian School and its governing body with regard to student health and wellness, the following policy guidelines have been developed based on SB27 and the DSHS guidelines.

A food allergy is an abnormal response to a food that is triggered by the body’s immune system and symptoms range from mild to severe and may be life-threatening. A recent report indicates an 18 percent increase in food allergies among school aged children in a recent ten year period. Because of the amount of time students spend in school, accidental contact with foods of concern and allergic reactions are likely to occur at school. Eight foods account for over 90 percent of allergic reactions: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, soy and wheat. However, all food has the potential of causing a reaction. Anaphylaxis is a serious reaction that has rapid onset and may be life-threatening, especially if the administration of epinephrine, the only treatment for anaphylaxis, is not administered quickly. Meridian School is committed to building a collaborative partnership with the students, parents, healthcare providers and school staff in order to promote the physical safety of children who are at-risk.

Signs and Symptoms

In the case of life-threatening food allergy reactions, more than one system of the body is involved. The mouth, throat, nose, eyes, ears, lung, stomach, skin, heart, and brain can all be affected. The most dangerous symptoms include breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which is potentially fatal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body System</th>
<th>Sign or Symptom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mouth</td>
<td>Tingling, itching, swelling of the tongue, lips or mouth; blue/grey color of the lips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throat</td>
<td>Tightening of throat; tickling feeling in back of throat; hoarseness or change in voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nose/Eyes/Ears</td>
<td>Runny, itchy nose, redness and/or swelling of eyes; throbbing in ears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung</td>
<td>Shortness of breath; repetitive shallow cough; wheezing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach</td>
<td>Nausea; vomiting; diarrhea; abdominal cramps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin</td>
<td>Itchy rash; hives; swelling of face or extremities; facial flushing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>Thin weak pulse; rapid pulse; palpitations; fainting; blueness of lips, face or nail beds; paleness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Treatment

Epinephrine is the first-line treatment for serious allergic reactions. It is generally prescribed as an auto-injector device (Epipen or Auvi-Q) that is relatively simple to use. Because of the risks involved, studies clearly favor epinephrine administration through an epinephrine injection rather than waiting for symptoms to subside. Reactions can occur
immediately or up to two hours following exposure. Initial symptoms are often followed by a delayed wave of symptoms two to four hours later. While initial symptoms may respond to epinephrine, the delayed response may not. Therefore, it is imperative that following the administration of the Epipen, the student be transported by emergency services to the nearest hospital emergency department, even if the symptoms appear to have resolved.

**School Management**

Meridian School is committed to the following four-phase approach to address the needs of students:
1. Identification of students with food allergies at-risk for anaphylaxis
2. Development of an IHP (Individual Health Plan) for students in coordination with parents and school staff, including health-care personnel, which addresses student placement in the school setting and specific health needs
3. Training for school staff on anaphylaxis and emergency response
4. Regular review of policy and procedures

The School Nurse will coordinate the development of the IHP in conjunction with administrators and/or their designee. An initial IHP meeting involving the nurse, parents of the student addressed, administrator/counselor, teacher, and other personnel as appropriate, will be scheduled at the beginning of the school year and will be held annually unless need dictates a meeting prior to the annual date. The School Nurse will receive ongoing training in the management of food allergies, including the administration and storage of epinephrine (Epipens) and will provide this training to ALL school staff (including contract cafeteria representatives). The training will include information about food allergens and the hazards of foods within the school, how to respond when a child exhibits signs and symptoms, how to read the IHP, administration of the epinephrine, and procedures for notification of emergency personnel. In addition, the school nurse will assist with providing training to students regarding the need to protect students with allergies within the classroom and cafeteria. The School Nurse and school staff will work together to implement IHP objectives and student specific strategies.

**Identification of Students With Food Allergies At-Risk for Anaphylaxis**

Meridian School maintains epinephrine auto-Injectors for the emergency treatment of anaphylaxis (a serious and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction). In accordance with Texas Education Code, Chapter 38, nurses and other designated (and trained) school personnel can administer auto-injectable epinephrine to anyone who is reasonably believed to be experiencing a life-threatening allergic reaction. An immediate 911 call and transport by ambulance to an emergency room is required any time auto-injected epinephrine is administered. The school’s emergency epinephrine is not intended to replace student specific orders.

It is imperative that parents provide accurate health information to the school in order to promote the safety of their child(ren). Meridian School enrollment forms contain a section where parents must address student health issues, including food allergies (both the type of allergy and severity). The School Nurse and Registrar will monitor enrollment forms to identify students with potential risk. The School Nurse will make contact with each family listed to understand the child’s health issue, the dietary concerns, and any additional information necessary, possibly including contact with the child’s medical team if appropriate. Additional registration forms will be required on each identified student giving additional and specific information prior to the IHP meeting.

**Development of an IHP**

Under the direction of the School Nurse, and with a committee composed of the student (if age appropriate), parents, other appropriate school staff, and administrator/counselor or designee, an Individual Health Plan will be developed for each identified student. The plan will include information and instructions specific to the needs of that child. This information will be provided to all staff members who have regular contact with the student (administration, classroom teacher, specialist teachers, etc.) and will be on file with the school nurse.

**Environmental Controls**
Meridian School will work to protect students from exposure to allergens to which they are sensitive. While the school does not have the ability to control all foods within the building, school personnel will work to provide information to parents with regard to food allergies and the responsibilities we share for all Meridian School students. Classroom snacks and lunches may be brought from home and are sometimes difficult to identify, however the school will work to educate parents to limit unintended exposure. Foods are not to be consumed in the hallways and common areas. Food-sharing in the cafeteria is prohibited, and school projects do not include food products. Campus-wide policies prohibit all foods in recognition of student birthdays, holidays, etc. and any which are delivered to the school are not accepted and/or returned to parents. In addition, foods for the three allowed school “parties” held per year are regulated by the classroom teacher with consideration of student needs.

Review of Policy and Procedures

A yearly administrative review will be provided to the Board by the Head of School and/or appropriate school personnel regarding current changes in state policy or recommended management of food allergies in the school setting; the school’s incident report summary, and recommendations for changes to the current policy and procedures. This will ensure that the most current information is utilized in providing for the safety of Meridian students. For those students who have experienced an allergic reaction at school, additional review by the IHP committee will help in promoting safety upon the child’s return to school.

Responsibilities

Responsibility of the Family

In promoting a safe school environment for children with food allergies, all parties involved should work as a team for the sole benefit of the child. Parents of the students will:
- Notify the school of the child’s allergies in accordance with TEC, Section 25.0022
- Work with the campus IHP (Individual Healthcare Plan) management team to create and review IHP if needed
- Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a physician using the form provided by the school
- Provide properly labeled medications and replacement medications after use or upon expiration
- Educate the child in the self-management of their food allergy including:
  - Safe and unsafe food
  - Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe food
  - Symptoms of allergic reactions
  - Not trading foods with others
  - Not eating anything with unknown ingredients
  - How and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy-related problem
  - How to read food labels (age appropriate)
  - The importance of carrying and administering their personal medications as prescribed (age appropriate)
- Review policies and procedures with school staff, child’s physician, and the child if age appropriate after a reaction has occurred
- Provide current and correct emergency contact information and update as needed

Responsibility of the School Staff

In promoting a safe school environment for children with food allergies, all parties involved should work as a team for the sole benefit of the child.

Administration or Designee will:
- Serve on the IHP Management team and attend meetings
- Facilitate development, implementation and monitoring of an allergy guidelines policy
- Develop an emergency response plan with the ability to modify to meet special needs of students
- Support faculty, staff and parents in implementing the policy and IHPs
- Coordinate training and education of faculty and staff
- Communicate with parents if students experience an allergic reaction at school
- Have a plan in place when there is not a school nurse available

The School Nurse will:
- Review enrollment information and conduct meetings with parents who indicate a diagnosis of a life-threatening allergic condition
- Coordinate the development of an IHP if appropriate through the IHP Management team
- Ensure proper completion of all related documents – with signatures
- Train faculty and staff on food allergy information and proper administration of epinephrine
- Provide discussion that is age appropriate with children in classes of students with allergy
- Periodically check medications for expiration dates and notify parents to obtain new medication
- Arrange for a contingency plan in case of absence of the nurse

The Classroom Teacher/Specialist will:
- Review the IHP of all student(s) in the class
- Develop plan as a part of the IHP team
- Keep accessible the IHP
- Make sure volunteers, student teachers, aides, and substitutes are informed of the necessary safeguards
- Coordinate with school nurse to provide a lesson on food allergies for the class as age appropriate
- Educate classmates to avoid endangering, isolating, stigmatizing, or harassing students with allergies; enforce school rules
- Work with school nurse to educate other parents about the need for consideration of food allergies in the classroom
- Participate with planning for students re-entry into school after having a reaction
- Establish procedures for snack – including washing hands before and after snacks and lunch
- Prohibit students from sharing or trading snacks
- Follow school guidelines / food policy

**Conclusion**

Given the increasing occurrence of food allergy reactions in children in the school setting, the school plays a major role in ensuring the health and safety of students. Meridian School takes this role seriously and asks that all parents within the Meridian school community acknowledge and accept their responsibility in assisting the school to provide a healthy environment for all children.
AIDING STUDENTS WHO HAVE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OR WHO NEED SPECIAL EDUCATION OR SECTION 504 SERVICES

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) listed below to learn about the school’s overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine if the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

Special Education Referrals:

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

If the district or charter school decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student’s initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent’s written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent’s consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school in a companion document titled Parent’s Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process.
**CONTACT PERSON FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRALS:**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is:

Contact Person:
- Primary Grades K-5: Susan Mais  s.mais@mwschool.org
- Secondary Grades 6-12: Haley Weisbrod  h.weisbrod@mwschool.org

Phone Number: 512-660-5230

**Section 504 Referrals:**

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district’s or charter school’s Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

**CONTACT PERSON FOR SECTION 504 REFERRALS:**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is:

Contact Person:
- Primary Grades K-5: Susan Mais  s.mais@mwschool.org
- Secondary Grades 6-12: Haley Weisbrod  h.weisbrod@mwschool.org

Phone Number: 512-660-5230

**Additional Information:**

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families.

- Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process
- Partners Resource Network
- Special Education Information Center
- Texas Project First
Cómo ayudar a aquellos estudiantes que tienen dificultades de aprendizaje o precisan servicios de educación especial o de la Sección 504

Para aquellos estudiantes que tienen dificultades en el salón de clases normal, todos los distritos escolares y las escuelas autónomas de inscripción abierta deben contemplar servicios de tutoría y compensatorios, y otros servicios de apoyo académico o conductual que estén disponibles para todos los estudiantes, incluido un proceso basado en la Respuesta a la Intervención (RtI). La implementación de la RtI tiene el potencial de impactar positivamente en la capacidad de los distritos y escuelas autónomas de satisfacer las necesidades de todos los estudiantes con problemas.

Si un estudiante está experimentando dificultades de aprendizaje, sus padres pueden comunicarse con la(s) persona(s) mencionada(s) más abajo para obtener información sobre el sistema general de remisión o control de la educación general de la escuela para los servicios de apoyo. Dicho sistema vincula a los estudiantes con una variedad de opciones de apoyo, entre las que se encuentra la remisión para que se realice una evaluación de educación especial o una evaluación de la Sección 504 con el fin de determinar si el estudiante necesita asistencia, adaptaciones o servicios específicos. Los padres pueden pedir una evaluación para los servicios de educación especial o de la Sección 504 en cualquier momento.

Remisiones de educación especial:

Si los padres solicitan, por escrito, al director de servicios de educación especial o a un empleado administrativo del distrito escolar o de la escuela autónoma de inscripción abierta que se realice una evaluación inicial para recibir servicios de educación especial, el distrito o la escuela autónoma deben responder dentro de los 15 días lectivos después de haber recibido la solicitud. En ese momento, el distrito o la escuela autónoma deben entregar a los padres notificación previa por escrito respecto de si están de acuerdo o no en evaluar al estudiante, además de enviarles una copia de la Notificación de salvaguardas procesales. Si el distrito escolar o la escuela autónoma están de acuerdo en evaluar al estudiante, también deben darles a los padres la oportunidad de prestar su consentimiento por escrito para la evaluación.

Por favor tenga en cuenta que una solicitud para una evaluación de educación especial puede hacerse verbalmente y no necesita hacerse por escrito. Los distritos y escuelas “chárter” deben seguir cumpliendo con todas las notificaciones previas por escrito y los requisitos sobre las salvaguardas procesales de la ley federal para identificar, localizar y evaluar a los niños que se intuya puedan ser niños con alguna discapacidad y que necesite educación especial. Sin embargo, una petición verbal no requiere que el distrito o la escuela “chárter” respondan dentro del periodo establecido de los 15 días escolares.

Si el distrito o la escuela autónoma deciden evaluar al estudiante, deben completar la evaluación inicial y el informe de la evaluación dentro de los 45 días lectivos posteriores al día en que reciben el consentimiento por escrito de los padres para evaluar al estudiante. Sin embargo, si el estudiante se ausenta de la escuela por tres días lectivos o más durante el período de evaluación, dicho período se extenderá la misma cantidad de días lectivos que el estudiante haya faltado.

Existe una excepción al plazo de 45 días lectivos. Si un distrito o una escuela autónoma reciben el consentimiento de los padres para la evaluación inicial entre los 35 y 45 días lectivos previos al último día de clases del año, deben completar el informe escrito y proporcionarles una copia de dicho informe a los padres, a más tardar, el 30 de junio de dicho año. No obstante, si el estudiante falta a la escuela tres días o más durante el período de evaluación, no se aplica la fecha límite del 30 de junio, sino que se aplica el plazo general de 45 días lectivos más prórrogas por ausencias de tres días o más.

Al completar la evaluación, el distrito o la escuela autónoma deben proporcionar a los padres una copia del informe de evaluación en forma gratuita.

Hay disponible información adicional sobre educación especial del distrito o la escuela autónoma en el documento complementario titulado Guía para padres sobre el proceso de admisión, revisión y retiro.

Persona de contacto para las remisiones de educación especial:

Meridian School Parent/Student Handbook & Code of Conduct
La persona designada para contactar en relación con las opciones para un estudiante que experimente dificultades de aprendizaje o en relación con una remisión a evaluación para recibir servicios de educación especial es:

Persona de contacto:
- Primary Grades K-5: Susan Mais  s.mais@mwschool.org
- Secondary Grades 6-12: Haley Weisbrod  h.weisbrod@mwschool.org

Número de teléfono: 512-660-5230

Remisiones de la Sección 504:

Cada distrito escolar o escuela autónoma debe tener estándares y procedimientos en vigor para la evaluación y colocación de estudiantes en el programa de la Sección 504 del distrito o la escuela autónoma. Además, los distritos y las escuelas autónoma deben implementar un sistema de salvaguardas procesales que incluya una notificación, una oportunidad para que los padres o tutores examinen los registros relevantes, una audiencia imparcial en la que puedan participar los padres o tutores y en la que haya representación por parte de un abogado, y un procedimiento de revisión.

Persona de contacto para las remisiones de la Sección 504:
La persona designada para contactar en relación con las opciones para un estudiante que experimente dificultades de aprendizaje o en relación con una remisión a evaluación para recibir servicios de la Sección 504 es:

Persona de contacto:
- Primary Grades K-5: Susan Mais  s.mais@mwschool.org
- Secondary Grades 6-12: Haley Weisbrod  h.weisbrod@mwschool.org

Número de teléfono: 512-660-5230

Información adicional:

Los siguientes sitios web ofrecen información y recursos para los estudiantes con discapacidades y sus familias.

- Marco legal del proceso de educación especial centrado en el niño
- Red de colaboradores y recursos
- Centro de Información de Educación Especial
- Texas Project First