

Miller Middle School

Student/Caregiver Handbook

Home of the Angels

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Office (970) 247-1418 Fax (970) 385-1191
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.



"Transforming Challenges into Triumphs: Angels and Demons United!"

Welcome to Miller Middle School (MMS). Middle school is a vital time for personal growth, and we are committed to partnering with you as you develop the healthy habits and character that will support your success both inside and outside the classroom. We are excited to have the opportunity to work with you and your family to successfully accomplish your educational goals as you proceed through your middle school years. Miller Middle School provides this handbook as part of due process in informing MMS community members of many of the policies and procedures of MMS and the Durango School District. It is your responsibility as a member of the Miller community to be familiar with and abide by policies and procedures found in this handbook. Administration reserves the right to make decisions in the best interest of the educational community within school and district guidelines that may not necessarily be contained in this handbook. It is impossible and impractical to list all policies and procedures in this handbook. To request any content in this document in a different format, please [contact Miller Middle School via email](#) or at **970-247-1418**.

Nondiscrimination Statement

Durango School District affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, age, national origin, religious belief, gender, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity unless exempted in the final regulation of the law.

Mission: Miller Middle School's mission is to be the highest performing middle school in SW Colorado, where every student thrives.

MMS Bell Schedule

	Monday	Minutes	Tuesday - Friday	Minutes
Release to Class	8:00		8:00	
Period 1	8:05 - 9:02	57	8:05 - 9:08	63
Period 2	9:06 - 9:58	52	9:12 - 10:09	57
Period 3	10:02 - 10:54	52	10:13 - 11:10	57
Period 4a/ Lunch (6th)	10:58 - 11:50/ L 11:50 - 12:30	52/40	11:14- 12:11/ L 12:11 - 12:51	57/40
Lunch (7th/8th)/ Period 4b	L 10:54 - 11:34/ 11:34- 12:26	40/52	L 11:10 - 11:50/ 11:50 - 12:47	40/57
Advisory			12:51- 1:21	30
Period 5	12:30 - 1:23	53	1:25 - 2:22	57
Period 6	1:27 - 2:20	53	2:26 - 3:25	59
Lunch	(7th Grade) 10:54 - 11:14	(8th Grade) 11:14 - 11:34	(6th Grade) 11:50 - 12:10	

For the latest updates on school-specific events, please check our official website.

2026-2027 Academic Calendar

July 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

October 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

November 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

July						
CONFERENCE DAYS: Elementary Schools 10:00am - 6:00pm Middle-High Schools 11:00am - 7:00pm						

August						
17	Professional Development Day - No School					
Aug 17-24	No School					
25	First Day of School					
31	Early Release-Students released one hour early					

September						
7	Labor Day Holiday No School					
14	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
21	Professional Development Day - No School					
28	Early Release-Students released one hour early					

October						
5	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
9	Fall Break Oct 9-12 No School					
19	Conference Day - No School					
22	Beginning/End of Grading Period					
26	Early Release-Students released one hour early					

November						
2	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
9	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
16	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
23	Thanksgiving Break Nov 23-27 No School					
30	Early Release-Students released one hour early					

December						
7	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
14	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
16	Finals Week Dec 16-18					
18	Beginning/End of Grading Period					
21	Winter Break Dec 21-Jan 1 No School					

January 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

March 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

May 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

January						
1	Winter Break Conf'd - No School					
4	Professional Development/Work Day - No School					
11	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
18	Martin Luther King Day - No School					
25	Early Release-Students released one hour early					

February						
1	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
8	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
15	President's Day No School					
22	Early Release-Students released one hour early					

March						
1	Conference Day - No School					
8	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
11	Beginning/End of Grading Period					
15	Spring Break Mar 15-19 No School					
22	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
29	Early Release-Students released one hour early					

April						
5	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
12	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
19	Professional Development Day - No School					
26	Early Release-Students released one hour early					

May						
3	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
10	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
17	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
24	Early Release-Students released one hour early					
25	Finals Week May 26 - 28					
28	Last Day of School/End of Grading Period					
31	Memorial Day - No School 20					

June						
1	Snow Make Up Days - IF NEEDED Jun 1-3					
4	Professional Development Day - No School					
	(May be June 1st if no snow make up days needed)					

2027 GRADUATION DATES:
 May 27, 2027 Bay Picture HS Graduation
 May 28, 2027 Durango HS Graduation

Accessible text version is available at www.durangoschools.org

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Academics

Academic Cheating and Plagiarism

Students are expected to conduct themselves honestly and with integrity in their work. All forms of cheating and plagiarism are prohibited and subject to disciplinary action. Students will be expected to complete an alternative assignment to demonstrate learning in all cases of cheating and/or plagiarism.

Advisory

Advisory aims primarily to cultivate a stronger school culture at Miller by building positive connections between administrators, teachers, and students, alongside helping students keep track of their own academic progress. It acts as a central hub for social-emotional learning, tailored personal and academic guidance, and weekly bullying prevention instruction utilizing the Olweus Curriculum.

Furthermore, this period supports career and college preparation by introducing students to YouScience and guiding them through the Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) framework. The ICAP provides a tailored roadmap for establishing goals and tracking graduation and career milestones, while YouScience employs engaging assessments to reveal natural aptitudes and talents, linking student strengths to actual career paths. By aligning with the Durango School District's Portrait of a Graduate (POG) model, this dedicated time provides holistic academic, social, and personal backing for every student while strengthening school-to-home connection.

Counseling

School counselors meet with students, caregivers, and teachers regarding academic, personal, social, and career planning concerns. Student confidentiality is upheld unless a student is at risk of hurting themselves or others, or if someone is hurting them. If caregivers do not want their student to speak with a counselor, the main office must be notified in writing in advance.

Grades, Late Work, and Summative Retakes

Miller Middle School implements a supportive and equitable grading structure designed to foster persistent academic engagement and provide avenues for recovery. Consequently, the minimum grade permissible for any assignment, test, or grading term is established at 50%. The breakdown of earned grades is structured as follows:

Assignments not completed by a unit deadline must be explicitly marked as 'Missing' in Infinite Campus (rather than left blank or unentered) to accurately reflect student progress; please note that missing grades are worth 50%.

4+= 100%

4= 95%

3.5= 90%

3= 85%

2.5= 80%

2= 75%

1.5= 70%

1= 65%

0= 50%

Gradebook Category Weight Policy:

- Summative: 80% - Summative grades are demonstrations of learning. ALL Summatives are eligible for retake/revision and must be completed within ten days of the returned, graded summative
- Formative: 20% - Formative grades are practice to learn the content, which may include homework, POG entries, and reading requirements.

Late Work & Absent Work Policy

A student has until the end of the unit to complete missing assignments. Assignments will not be accepted after a unit is finished unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher.

Summative Retake Policy

Students are provided at least two opportunities to demonstrate mastery on any summative assessment (excluding final exams). The higher grade will be recorded in the gradebook. Teachers will offer the retake or revision opportunity within **10 school days** of returning the graded assessment.

Homework & Technology Baseline

Policy Framework

The "10-Minute Rule" Cap

Homework must be purpose-driven and strictly aligned with student learning goals. Daily homework volume follows National PTA/NEA guidelines: **10 minutes per grade level per night** across all subjects combined.

Cumulative Daily Limits:

- **6th Grade:** Max 60 minutes
- **7th Grade:** Max 70 minutes
- **8th Grade:** Max 80 minutes

** Comprehensive guidelines are being developed in collaboration with the ILT and will be shared with families.*

Approved Assignment Focus Areas

01

Retrieval Practice & Review

Low-stakes practice, flashcards, or digital review.

02

Preparation

Short readings or tasks required for upcoming class discussions or labs.

03

Unfinished Classwork & Reading

Completion of assigned daily tasks or ongoing reading goals.

High-School Level Courses

Miller Middle School provides opportunities for middle school students to take high school-level courses. These courses follow the Colorado Academic Standards and high school curriculum. Successful completion awards high school credit, and the course title and letter grade will appear on the student's high school transcript

Attendance & Schedules

Regular attendance is essential for learning. Students must attend all assigned classes unless a caregiver notifies the attendance office.

- **Excused Absences:** Illness, family emergencies, or authorized school activities.
- **Absence Reporting:** Caregivers must notify the office within 48 hours of an absence to ensure it is excused.
- **Pre-Arranged Absences:** Submit a completed Pre-Arranged Absence Form at least 5 days in advance.
- **Truancy:** Per state law, habitual truancy (4 unexcused absences in a month or 10 in a year) triggers an attendance contract and potential referral to diversion programs.

Early Dismissal (JLIB)

To ensure the health and safety of all students, the school district has established procedures to validate early dismissal requests. Whenever possible, please schedule medical, dental, and other appointments outside of school hours. Early dismissal will only be granted for proper reasons and with proper validation.

Please note that students will not be dismissed based on phone calls or emails.

- **No Phone/Email Requests:** Students will not be dismissed based on phone calls or emails.
- Students will only be released to individuals officially listed in Infinite Campus by a legal guardian, and any exceptions require approval from the principal or designee. Please check out your student through the main office by using the call button at the front entrance.
- **End-of-Day Cutoff:** Avoid pickups during the last 30 minutes of the school day. Except in emergencies, student pickups after 3:00 PM must wait until the standard release bell.

Tardy Policy & Intervention

Miller Middle School provides a four-minute passing period between classes.



"4-to-the-Door" Protocol

4-minute passing periods. Once doors lock, students must report to the Front Office for a tardy slip.

Weekly Rewards & Consequences

Weekly Reward Target

3

Students are entered into exciting prize drawings for 3 or less tardies.

4+

Caregiver Notification

Caregivers receive an automated text notification.

6+

Monday In-School Suspension (ISS)

Requires a structured reset: reflection, academic grade audit, and emailing teachers.

Schedule Changes and Repairs

Students and parents must be the primary decision makers in determining desired school courses. Please read all the information in the *Miller Elective Course Catalog*, attend the informational sessions offered, refer to your YouScience results, and ask for guidance from teachers, counselors, and administrators in order to facilitate your student's achievement of his/her future goals.

The choices made by students during our spring registration are the principal factors used to create the master schedule. A major effort is made to offer students their first choice of classes, minimize potential course conflicts, and to balance the size of classes. For these reasons, it is crucial that students and parents take time and care in planning the electives requested for the next year. Although schedule changes are allowed at the beginning of the semester, it is entirely possible that such changes may not be feasible due to the conflicts imposed by the master schedule.

Schedule repairs WILL NOT BE MADE after the first three days of class. Repairs in a student's course schedule should only be made when absolutely necessary. The following are acceptable reasons for schedule repairs:

- A student is inappropriately placed academically or by grade level.
- There is no class scheduled in a particular period.
- A student is placed in the same class twice.
- An illness or injury prevents participation in class.

We are not able to guarantee any requested change. We are also unlikely to grant changes to students who have already had a course change request made. [Please use this form](#) to put in your request.

Interscholastic Athletics and Activities

Extracurricular activities provide valuable social, academic, and athletic growth. MMS enforces a **no-cut policy** for middle school interscholastic sports. Participants and spectators are expected to display positive sportsmanship. Taunting, aggressive language, or disrespectful behavior toward opponents or officials will result in removal and potential suspension from future events.

Athletic/Activities Code of Conduct

MMS students and parents are encouraged to attend extracurricular events to show their school spirit and pride. Extracurricular activities are intended to provide social, academic, and athletic experiences for both participants and spectators. Enthusiasm and vocal support are always encouraged. Spectators are expected to exercise good judgment in clothing and behavior, and spectators and participants are expected to conduct themselves in a positive and respectful manner towards all participants and officials. All spectators and participants are encouraged to show pride and be positive role models for all those attending by cheering for their team and not against the opponent or the officials. Inappropriate behavior, including but not limited to booing, taunting, throwing objects, displaying inappropriate signage, or generally exhibiting aggressive behavior, is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

Athletic/Activity Academic Eligibility Requirements

To participate in any school-sponsored or sanctioned interscholastic event, MMS students must maintain standard academic standing:

- Students must maintain a **"C" or higher in every class**.
- Any cumulative grade lower than a "C" will render the student ineligible to participate in Miller-sponsored athletic contests, practice, or extracurricular activities for the subsequent week (Monday through Monday).
- Coaches will notify students and parents beforehand if a student is at risk of becoming academically ineligible.

Athletic/Activities Registration Requirements

Students wanting to participate in any interscholastic sports or activities must register before being allowed to participate.

- Interscholastic [Fees/registration](#): Students participating in any interscholastic activity are required by the District to pay a fee to participate. Middle school fees are \$30 for the first sport, \$25 for the second sport, not to exceed \$55/participant/year and \$70/family/year (These fees are subject to change based

upon the fiscal strength of the District in any given year. There will be information sent home should changes occur in any given year).

School Culture

We incorporate clear behavior expectations and routines within our classrooms and hold our students to high expectations each and every day. We expect our Miller Angels to strive to exemplify the competencies of a Portrait of a Graduate to ensure the best possible academic and social outcomes. The Portrait of a Graduate competencies are:

Courageous Leader ~ Creative Problem-Solver ~ Confident Communicator
Agile Thinker ~ Empathetic Collaborator ~ Resilient Risk-Taker

We want our students to be the best they can be every day, and we understand and want to support our students when this may not happen.

PTO

Please join us! Miller Parent Teacher Organization will host open meetings each month during the 26-27 School year that run approximately 75 minutes. Please look for details on our school website or in our monthly school newsletter. We have a full PTO Board this year and are working to increase caregiver attendance at meetings. Hope to see you there!

- There will be no meetings in November and December.

Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports

The Mission of Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports at Miller is to cultivate a learning environment and school culture in which all learn, develop and successfully use thinking, academic, and social tools so that students leave Miller as conscientious and impactful members of our global community.

Recess & Lunch Meeting Groups

Classroom access during recess and lunch is a privilege subject to specific expectations:

- Sessions are strictly for academic support, teacher check-ins, studying, and project work, not informal socializing.
- Prior approval or a designated teacher pass is required. Unsupervised students are not permitted in instructional areas.
- All meals, snacks, and drinks must remain in the cafeteria.
- Violating academic focus, sign-in, or food guidelines may result in losing the privilege to attend these groups.

Respectful Communication

We expect all persons to maintain respectful and productive communication. In the event a caregiver demonstrates disrespectful, aggressive, and/or inappropriate communication with staff, staff has been directed by school administration to end the communication and inform said person that school administration will follow up.

- Your first point of contact concerning general academic and behavior communication will be with your child's teacher for the specific class that you are concerned with. This person can help answer the questions you have and collaborate with the appropriate staff to address any other concerns. It is preferred that caregivers reach out first to teachers to address questions and seek information before communicating with school administrators.
- Communication with students during the school day

- Students will not have access to personal devices. Please avoid sending texts to communicate as this can be distracting to a student's learning.
- We ask caregivers to be vigilant in ensuring students come to school each day with any family information they need for the day. In the rare event you need to communicate with your student during the day, do so through the main office. Our number is 970-247-1418. We will deliver the message toward the end of the day.
- Should a student need to contact parents, school staff can facilitate the use of a school phone.

Student Clubs & Activities

Extracurriculars at Miller Middle School build leadership, academic skills, and community, and all students are encouraged to join! Please review our participation, academic, and attendance procedures before getting involved in our available activities: Student Council, Green Team, Knowledge Bowl, and Chess Club.

Club & Activity Overview

- Student Council: Meets bi-weekly during Advisory. Plans spirit weeks, service projects, quarterly assemblies, and 3 annual school dances. Students must complete an application for this activity.
- Green Team: Meets before/after school. Focuses on sustainability, the School Garden, the SOIL Lab partnership, and the district Bike to School event.
- Knowledge Bowl: Practice 2x/week before/after school. Fast-paced buzzer academic competition across 6th and 7th/8th grade divisions.
- Chess Club: Meets weekly before/after school. Offers strategy lessons, ladder play, an annual campus tournament, and regional meets.
- Rocket Team: Meets after school/Saturday morning. Focuses on aerospace engineering, rocket design, altitude testing, and model rocket launches.
- Jazz Lab: Meets after school. Open to student musicians exploring jazz performance, improvisation, ensemble playing, and school concerts.

Eligibility Requirements

- (Strict) Students must be present at school on the day of an event to attend or participate in any after-school activity, practice, club meeting, or school dance. Unexcused absences or early check-outs on event days forfeit participation.
- Students in all clubs and activities must maintain academic eligibility by having no failing grades (F's).
- Behavior: Suspensions or multiple detentions result in removal. Prompt pick-up after events and meetings is required.

Student Technology

Acceptable Use & Supervision

Laptops are restricted to teacher-directed, school-related activities. Frameworks for daily laptop use are currently being developed and will be shared once complete. Inappropriate or harmful use may result in restricted privileges—such as required direct staff supervision or shifting to paper-based coursework—in addition to standard disciplinary procedures.

Chromebook Use, Care & Responsibility

Each student is issued a district laptop for educational use while enrolled at Miller Middle School. 6th and 7th-grade Chromebooks remain at school, while 8th graders may take their devices home daily. Personal laptops or non-district devices are not permitted, as Miller's network exclusively supports district-owned devices. Upon withdrawal from MMS, devices must be returned or families will be billed full replacement costs.

Damage, Warranty, and Repair Procedures

Students must report technical issues to the Media Assistant, who will coordinate repairs with the Building Technician.

- *Accidental Damage:* Families pay for repairs or replacement if damage occurs, and costs may be assessed accordingly; however, the manufacturer warranty typically covers the first qualified repair. Families and students will review proper handling and storage practices with school staff to help prevent damage.
- *Malicious Damage:* Results in repair/replacement costs, disciplinary action, counselor follow-up, and potential restriction to an older "loaner" model or in-school-only use.

Internet and Email

MMS provides Internet services for all students for educational purposes. All students are also provided a school email account. In order for a student to use the Internet and email, a New Email Account Form must be on file evidencing that the student and parent(s) have read and accept the terms of the District Acceptable Use Policy as stated in the *Durango School District Student & Family Success Guide*.

Use of MMS Internet and email services is a privilege. Random monitoring of student accounts occurs throughout the school year. Students who violate the terms of the use agreement, including, but not limited to, sharing login information, playing computer games, attempting to bypass the district internet filter, visiting chat rooms or inappropriate websites, posting inappropriate content on social media, etc., may lose their privileges as well as suffer other possible disciplinary action.

Loss or Theft

Lost or stolen devices must be reported to the school immediately. For stolen devices, families must file an official police report and coordinate with law enforcement. Devices left unattended (e.g., on top of lockers, in unlocked lockers, or in open backpacks) are classified as negligence—not theft—and families will be responsible for full replacement costs.

Mandated Protective Cases & Screen Protectors

- *Protective Case:* Devices must remain in their district-provided protective case/bag at all times, including during class and transport. Operating or carrying a Chromebook outside its case voids coverage, making families responsible for damages.
- *Screen Protector:* Removal of the factory-installed screen protector incurs an immediate **\$20 charge** and voids all district coverage/warranties.

Student Logins

Each MMS student is provided with a school Google account and Infinite Campus (grades and attendance plus) account. In most cases, the username is

firstname.lastname## (example, Robert Brown born in 2008 would be robert.brown08). Temporary passwords will be provided to each student at the beginning of the new school year. These will need to be changed at first log-in.

Student Cell Phone & Device Policy

OFF

During the School Day
PTDs must be **powered off and stored out of sight** (in a backpack or locker) for the entire day, from arrival to dismissal. This includes **earbuds**.

USE

Before & After School
Permitted on campus and school buses. **Strictly prohibited** during interscholastic events or field trips.

Policy Framework & Definitions

Device Classification (PTD)
Includes any privately-owned electronic device: cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, laptops, cameras, and audio/video recorders. In accordance with District Policy **JICJ**.

Violation Consequences
Failure to comply may result in **device confiscation**, requiring a parent or guardian to retrieve the item from the office.

* Liability Disclaimer: The district and school are not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of any personal technology devices brought onto school property.

This is based on board policy: [Student Use of Cell Phones and Other Personal Technology Devices](#)[District Policy, JICJ](#).

Health and Safety

Closed Campus

MMS has a closed campus policy. Once students **arrive** on campus, they must remain until the end of the day or are properly signed out. Anyone entering the building must check into the office.

Evacuation Procedures

Evacuation maps are posted in every classroom and meeting space, showing primary and alternate exit routes.

- **In-Class Evacuations:** Students must remain under direct teacher supervision at all times. If a primary exit is blocked by fire or hazards, students must listen closely to teacher instructions and proceed quickly and quietly through the nearest safe alternative exit. Any student separated from their class must report directly to the nearest staging area and check in with a staff member immediately.
- **Out-of-Class Evacuations:** If an evacuation occurs between classes, students must exit through the nearest doors quickly and quietly. Once outside, students must proceed to their designated staging area and check in with a staff member.
- **Accounting & Return:** Teachers and staff will take attendance at staging areas and report headcounts to the designated lead staff member. Students will be permitted to return to classrooms only after an administrator issues an official all-clear signal.

Notice: Falsely pulling a fire alarm is a severe offense that will result in suspension or expulsion from school, as well as potential legal action.

Health Services

The health office is staffed daily by school nurses or health aides. Some of the health services offered to students are the following: vision, hearing, blood pressure, and growth measurement screenings; health assessment and intervention for students with chronic health conditions; health counseling and general health promotion. Please contact us if your child has a chronic health condition or if you would like additional information about the program.

- **Immunizations:** All students must comply with the Colorado Immunization Law. In accordance with Colorado State Law, students may be denied attendance at school until records of required immunizations are provided. The health office can help students obtain required vaccinations if necessary. The school Principal or designee must be notified in writing to obtain a personal, religious, or medical exemption.
- **Medications:**
Students should not carry over-the-counter medications with them to school. If necessary, the student must have an “Authorization for Self-Care Administration of Medicine” form on file in the health services office. In compliance with Colorado State laws and Durango School District policy regarding medications, MMS students must have written permission from a parent and a doctor in order to take over-the-counter medications at school, such as Tylenol, Advil, Sudafed, etc., you must provide the Health Office with:
 1. Written permission from the caregiver
 2. Written instructions from your Physician
 3. The medication. Both prescription and over-the-counter medications need to be provided to the school. It must be in the original, labeled container with the student’s name on it.

Forms for Physician permission are available through the Health Office.

Insurance

If insurance coverage is not provided for students by a family insurance policy, we advise participating in the insurance plan provided through the school. The school does not sell the insurance. It is handled through an insurance company and is provided for all students on a voluntary basis. Please see the health office if you have questions or concerns regarding insurance coverage for your child. It is the responsibility of every student to report all accidents occurring on school grounds to the health office as soon as possible. Questions about the claim should be referred directly to your insurance company.

Safety, Emergency Protocols & Evacuations

Student safety is our top priority. To help maintain a safe environment, students are strongly encouraged to report unusual activity or unauthorized individuals on campus to a school safety officer, administrator, or teacher immediately.

MMS utilizes Standard Response Protocols (SRP) to respond to emergencies:

- ***Hold:*** Used when hallways need to be cleared. Students remain in their classrooms, and normal instruction continues inside.
- ***Secure:*** Used for external threats or hazards. All students and staff are brought indoors, exterior doors are locked, and instruction continues as normal.

- **Lockdown:** Used for internal threats or hazards. Everyone follows the directive "*Locks, Lights, Out of Sight,*" moves out of view, and maintains silence.
- **Evacuate:** Used to move students and staff to another location due to a physical hazard inside the building (e.g., fire).
- **Shelter:** Used for personal protection against natural or hazardous conditions (e.g., severe weather, hazardous materials) using specific hazard actions.

Behavior and Discipline

Bullying/Ethnic Intimidation of Students

Bullying is defined as a pattern of behavior intended to cause distress in one or more students and includes physical or verbal harassment or threatening behavior towards others. Such intimidation, including cyberbullying, is not permitted and may be considered illegal. Students involved in *any* type of bullying may be suspended, referred to law enforcement, and/or be recommended for expulsion.

Ethnic intimidation is prohibited under Colorado law and is classified as a criminal offense. Incidents of ethnic intimidation, as defined by law, shall be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities for investigation.

Bus Conduct

Students are expected to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct while riding a school bus. Refer to the *Durango School District Student & Family Success Guide* for the rules regarding all school bus passengers on all routes and on all school-sponsored activity trips. Violations of these rules may result in suspension or expulsion from transportation services and/or school.

Classroom Behavior

Students are expected to demonstrate behaviors that support a classroom environment that promotes learning. Each classroom will have clear expectations that support learning. Listed below are examples of common expectations that support learning.

- Students are actively engaged in classroom activities
- All teachers must require students to store cell phones and earbuds in designated classroom technology pockets during class.
- Teacher's directions are followed with respect
- Students are on time and ready to learn when class begins
- Students have permission and a hall pass when leaving class
- No food or drink (besides water) in the classroom
- Language is positive and supportive
- Classroom conversation is relevant to the class discussion

Students are not expected to be perfect, and staff will provide appropriate reminders and redirections to support students meeting expectations. Students are expected to follow reminders and redirection.

Disruptive behavior may be classified as anything that interferes with the instructional process and student learning. Within the classroom, the teacher determines if a student's behavior is considered disruptive. Listed below are some examples of common forms of disruptive behavior:

- Use of cellular phones or other electronic devices that are not for instructional purposes
- Challenges to the teacher's authority
- Tardiness
- Open drink containers
- Leaving class without permission
- Making offensive remarks
- Classroom conversation not relevant to class discussion

Students who disrupt the learning environment will be redirected (see Discipline and Consequences). Continued disruptive behavior will lead to disciplinary action. Habitual disruption can lead to recommendation for expulsion from school.

If a student needs to leave a classroom for any reason, the student must have permission from the teacher. The student must have a hall pass when in the hall during class periods.

Discipline and Consequences

The goal of discipline is two-fold: to provide a safe and healthy atmosphere for students and staff and to develop student growth in a positive direction. Therefore, we have developed a code that is progressive in nature, follows legal due process, and allows for student growth in making appropriate behavior choices.

MMS Staff will follow this process in dealing with normal disciplinary matters:

1. Work with the student to try to modify behavior
2. Contact parents
3. Contact the administration with parent/teacher/student/or mediator

Administrative disciplinary actions are listed in detail in the *Durango School District Student & Family Success Guide* in the Student Conduct Code and Discipline section. Students and parents should refer to this guide for specific details.

Dress Code Enforcement:

A student who violates this dress code will be notified of the violation. Before re-entering class, the student will be provided one or more of the following three options: (1) wear their own alternative clothing, if available at school; (2) wear school provided clothing; or (3) call a parent or guardian to bring alternative clothing. A parent conference may be held at the discretion of the building-level administrator. More severe disciplinary consequences, including suspension or expulsion, may result from repeated or serious violations.

School personnel have the right to confiscate articles that are forbidden on campus under the above code. If an item such as a shirt, jacket, etc. is confiscated, students will be provided one or more of the options listed above for alternative clothing. Confiscated items will be sent to the Principal's Office where they may be released to the parent/guardian. Students who refuse to surrender an article will be subject to disciplinary procedures for defiance.

Drugs/Alcohol Use and Abuse

It is a violation of district policy and detrimental to student and staff safety for any student to possess, use, sell, distribute, procure, or be under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or other controlled substances. Violations will result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension, expulsion, behavioral plans, drug counseling, and referral to law enforcement.

Electronic Devices

MMS staff and administration are not responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices, nor will they engage in searching for lost or stolen devices. All electronic devices must be turned off and put away during class time. Teachers will require students to utilize a cell phone storage system in their classroom to prevent phone use. If students are found to be using electronic devices during the instructional day, consequences are as follows:

- 1st Offense** – teacher confiscates phone/device, caregiver must pick up phone from the office
- 2nd Offense** – teacher confiscates phone/device, caregiver must pick up phone from the office
- 3rd Offense** – caregiver must pick up phone/device from the office AND meet with an administrator
- 4th and subsequent** – Further infractions will result in progressive discipline for insubordination.

Expulsion

Expulsion may be recommended by an administrator to the superintendent for behavior on or off school property that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other pupils or school personnel.

Some examples of behaviors that will result in a recommendation for expulsion after a single incident include, but are not limited to: distribution of drugs or alcohol, assault, possession or use of dangerous weapons, threats of harm or violence, or criminal acts that, if committed by an adult, would result in felony charges.

Repeated behaviors that accumulate during a student's middle school career that could result in a recommendation for expulsion include, but are not limited to: drug or alcohol violations, fighting, theft, destruction of property, bullying, or harassment.

Hallway Behavior

Student safety and security are top priorities. Students are expected to exhibit appropriate hallway behavior. Horseplay, excessive tough/rough play, throwing objects, etc. is prohibited. Students are expected to clean up after themselves and not leave trash in the hallways, cafeteria, or any other common spaces. Lunch may be eaten in the cafeteria or classrooms with teacher permission.

- Minga Passes: All movement outside standard passing periods is logged via Minga.
- Student ID: Displaying your ID each morning is part of "Owning Your Actions."

Knives/Weapons

Possession of any weapon or facsimile is not permitted on any school property or at any school event and can result in an immediate out-of-school suspension, possible referral to law enforcement, and may result in recommendation for expulsion. Any knife, weapon, or facsimile will be confiscated and will not be returned.

Lighters

Lighters or other incendiary devices are not allowed on campus. Possession and/or use of a lighter is a suspendable offense. It will be confiscated and will not be returned. Possession of other incendiary devices, including fireworks, will be reported to the police and subject to school disciplinary action.

School Resource Officer (SRO)

The goal of the School Resource Officer is to provide a safe learning environment and to help/prevent/reduce school violence. The SRO helps to improve perceptions and relations between students, staff, and law enforcement officials. The SRO also provides education as needed in violence prevention, safety, alcohol and drug prevention, and crime prevention.

Search And Seizure

Students have the right to privacy of person, as well as the freedom from unreasonable search and seizure of property as guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution. These individual rights, however, are balanced by the school's responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all students and staff. A search of student's person, and/or personal effects, i.e. purse, backpack, etc., shall be undertaken if there are reasonable grounds for an administrator to suspect that the student possesses a dangerous weapon, prohibited/illegal substance, object or item that may interfere with school purposes and/or present a threat to people or property, or suspect possession of a stolen item.

Student Dress Code Policy (JICA)

Definitions:

- "Apparel" means clothing; headwear; facial coverings; accessories such as scarves, sunglasses, or jewelry; shoes; and articles worn as clothing.
- "Grooming" means makeup, tattoos, and hairstyle.
- "Dress code" means the set of parameters established within this Policy that describes the standards for student attire and grooming.

General Principles:

- Districtwide standards on student apparel are intended to reduce discipline problems and maintain school order and safety. Students are encouraged to dress appropriately for all school activities and school-sponsored events.
- Reasonable cleanliness of apparel is expected as a matter of general health and welfare. Apparel should not interfere with or endanger the student while the student is participating in classroom or other school-sponsored activities. The decision as to the safety or unsuitability of the apparel is a matter for the instructor's or school administrator's judgment.
- Apparel must be worn in a way that covers breasts, nipples, genitals, and buttocks.
- Apparel covering these areas must be opaque. Items listed in the "Students Must Wear" section must meet this requirement.
- Subject to approval of the superintendent or designee, principals may establish additional specific standards for their own schools.

Students Must Wear*:

1. A shirt (covers the upper part of the body with fabric in the front, back, and on the sides underneath the arms); AND
2. Pants or the equivalent (e.g., a skirt, sweatpants, leggings, a dress, or shorts); AND
3. Shoes (e.g., sandals, boots, or athletic shoes).

*Course, athletic, or activity specific apparel or shoe requirements may be permitted as authorized by the principal or designee (e.g., athletic shoes for physical education).

Students Cannot Wear:

1. Apparel that causes or is likely to cause disruption of the educational process, which may include apparel that displays symbols of hate or speech that expresses animus or violence toward a particular group or individual on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, age or disability.
2. Apparel that depicts, implies, advertises, or advocates:
 - a. Illegal or lewd conduct;
 - b. Pornography, nudity, or sexually suggestive language or messages;
 - c. Vulgar or obscene language or images.
3. Swimsuits (except as required in class or athletics).
4. Apparel that covers a student's face, eyes, or ears. Hats or hoods that do not obscure a student's face or ears are permitted. Protective facial coverings or apparel/headgear worn for religious or medical purposes are also permitted.
5. Any manner of grooming or apparel, which by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark, or other attribute is associated with or denotes membership in or affiliation with any gang. The prohibition on gang-related apparel shall be applied at the discretion of school principals after consultation with the superintendent or designee as the need arises at individual schools.

Suspension

Students may be suspended for violating student conduct policies, whether the behavior occurs on or off school property, if it is detrimental to the safety or welfare of the school community. Depending on the nature and severity of the infraction, administration may assign either In-School Suspension (ISS) or Out-of-School Suspension (OSS).

- ***In-School Suspension (ISS):*** Students may be suspended from participation in the general population and continue attending school; this is termed an 'In-School Suspension'. ISS will be served at a specific location within the school under the supervision of Miller staff. During ISS, students are expected to complete learning assignments and the period of ISS can be extended if students do not complete appropriate assignments. Students who are on ISS are not allowed to participate in or attend any extracurricular school activities including practices during the period of the ISS. During ISS, Students are entitled to receive credit for work completed and turned in during the suspension period.
- ***Out-of-School Suspension (OSS):*** Students may be suspended from school according to the school's conduct policies. Students who are suspended are not allowed to participate in or attend any school activities or practices during the period of the suspension. Students may not be on any school district property during the period of their suspension. MMS administration may require the student and parent/guardian to have a re-admit conference before the student is allowed to return to school. Students suspended from school are entitled to receive credit for work completed and turned in during the suspension period.

Tobacco

Possession or use of any tobacco product including smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes, or vape pens on school property or at school-sponsored events is prohibited. Students will be progressively disciplined for infractions.

Profanity

Students are expected to use appropriate language at school at all times. This includes in

the hallways, outdoors, and at school events. Use of profanity at school or on school grounds may result in progressive disciplinary action. Cursing directed at an individual is considered more serious and can result in disciplinary action.

Public Display of Affection

Obvious displays of romantic interest including kissing on the mouth, prolonged hugging, and other inappropriate touching are not acceptable behaviors at school. Students may be assigned disciplinary action according to school policies ranging from warnings to suspension.

Responsible Behavior

Students are expected to behave responsibly whether they are on or off Durango School District property. All school rules apply when students are attending off-campus school activities. Behavior off-campus that has a negative or detrimental impact on MMS may result in disciplinary action.

Students and parents should refer to the *District Student & Family Success Guide* for specific details on Durango School District code of conduct and infraction consequences. The information contained in this MMS student handbook addresses specific policies and guidelines at Miller Middle School. A copy of the Student Conduct and Discipline Code can be found within the Success Guide. It is available at the District Administration Office and on the District website: www.durangoschools.org.

School Property

MMS takes pride in providing excellent school facilities and a beautiful campus for our students. Disrespect, destruction, and/or defacement of school property (books, furniture, the building, etc.) will result in the student paying restitution for damages in addition to the possibility of suspension and/or legal charges. Littering on school property is an offense that may result in disciplinary action.

Sexual Harassment

All students, staff, and visitors at MMS are protected from sexual harassment by other students or school employees. Sexual harassment of a student is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Any suspected violation should be reported to a guidance counselor, teacher, or administrator. Sexual harassment is recognized as a form of sex discrimination. Students who sexually harass other students, staff or visitors will be disciplined. Any reports of behavior that meets criteria for sexual harassment will be reported to the 9R Title 9 compliance officer. **See the District Student and Family Success Guide for more information.**

Staff Abuse

Students who threaten, harass or curse staff members will be removed from that class until such time that a restorative conversation can be held with the staff member **and** their behavior will be reviewed for possible suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement. Students who intentionally strike or injure a staff member may be expelled and prosecuted.

Other Policies

Animals

Except for certified service animals or in pre-approved special circumstances, students are not permitted to bring animals on campus.

Bicycles and Skateboards

Students riding bicycles to school must park them in a bike rack. Class 3 e-bikes, which have a minimum rider age of 16 years, are not allowed. Skateboards, skates, and scooters are not to be ridden on any property of the Durango School District or taken into the building. Bicycles should not be ridden on sidewalks when pedestrians are present. It is the student's responsibility to make sure his/her skateboard/scooter/bike is secured.

Exchange of Money and Goods at School

The unauthorized selling, buying, and/or trading of merchandise at school is prohibited. This includes buying, selling, or trading electronic devices, food or drink, clothing, sports apparel, and equipment. Non-school sponsored fundraisers are prohibited.

Free and Reduced Lunch Program & Benefits

Lunch and Breakfast are free for all students. It is requested that families complete the Food and Nutrition application to better support our school district in collecting data for other academic programs and funding. You may complete your application online through your Campus Parent Portal Account, at the District Office, or cafeterias of any of the District schools. This information is kept confidential by law. Other benefits include reduced or waived activities/athletic fees and transit/trolley passes.

Identification Card

All MMS students will be issued an MMS Student ID. Students are expected to carry their ID with them at all times while at school. For a replacement ID, visit the front office. Students must show their ID for the following privileges:

- Entrance to school and boarding district transportation
- Attend school dances and other school events

Students who fail to carry their ID will receive a warning for the first two offenses. Subsequent violations will result in consequences, such as lunch detention or other disciplinary action.

Lunch Process

- The Cafeteria is designated for students to eat.
- All areas will be supervised by identified Miller Staff
- Commercial food delivery services (e.g., DoorDash, Grubhub, UberEats) are not permitted on school grounds for students at any time during the school day.

Messages for Students

The Main office will not accept messages for students from parents/ guardians. Please communicate with your student before or after school. Emergencies will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Props for Speeches

Students who wish to use a prop for a speech or presentation must first discuss it with their teacher. Guns, facsimiles, or any other items resembling weapons are strictly prohibited. If the teacher has any concerns about the proposed prop, the following steps must be followed:

1. The student must obtain written permission from the teacher, specifying the date and purpose for bringing the prop to school.
2. The teacher will provide a copy of this written permission to the school principal on the same day.

By following these steps, we ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for all

students.

School Withdrawal Procedure

To withdraw a student:

1. Contact the school registrar for the official withdrawal form.
2. Return all school materials (books, gear, etc.) to the appropriate staff to clear any outstanding fees and confirm grades. Obtain the required counselor signature, then submit the form to an administrator for final approval.
3. Return the completed form to the registrar to receive documentation for your student's new school.

Transportation & Bus Procedures

Route Management & Schedule

Bus routes are managed by the **Transportation Department** (970-247-5335). All students must register online annually.

Track routes in real-time via the **Stopfinder app** or visit the district transportation webpage.

Daily Bus Schedule:

- **Morning Drop-off:** 8:00 AM
- **Afternoon Pick-up:** 3:35 PM

Student ID & Bus Pass Requirement

Middle school students must **carry and wear** their official ID badge daily, scanning it upon boarding and exiting.

Failure to present a valid ID may result in office referrals or temporary loss of bus privileges.

Safety Protocols & Device Policies

MMS-to-DHS Transfers: Students must take the official bus. Walking between campuses is **strictly prohibited** for safety.

Field Trips & PTDs: While devices are allowed on daily routes, they are **strictly prohibited** on field trips and must be stored in caddies.

Volunteers

All volunteers must be approved in advance by the principal. Volunteers must complete the Durango School District Authorized Volunteer form (available online at durangoschools.org). All volunteers must undergo a background check; please plan in advance as a background check can take anywhere from one (1) to ten (10) days.