

Washington Middle School
STUDENT HANDBOOK
Miles City Unified School District

2025-2026



Who Makes Success, We Make Success!

WMS Mission Statement: Washington Middle School strives to develop the whole student academically through relationships, character, safety, respect, and responsibility.

To Students and Parents: The Washington Middle School Student Handbook contains information that students and parents are likely to need during the school year. The handbook is organized alphabetically by topic. Throughout the handbook, the term “the student’s parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that this document is updated annually, while policy adoption and revision is an ongoing process. Therefore, any changes in policy that affect student handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through various communications. These changes will generally supersede provisions found in this handbook that have been made obsolete by newly adopted policy.

Please note that references to policy codes are included to help parents confirm current policy. In case of conflict between Board Policy or any provisions of student handbooks, the provisions in the student handbooks are to be followed.

The Miles City Unified School District’s policies can be found on the district website at:
<https://www.milescityschools.com/>

Middle School Expectations

We are excited to welcome students into middle school and this transition includes higher expectations. Research shows that holding students to higher expectations promotes self-esteem and builds students’ confidence and academic performance.

- 1. Students should begin to more readily advocate for themselves. They should be checking in with their teachers, they are responsible for staying after school if needed, and they should report misconduct to the office.**
- 2. Students have a school issued email they may use to communicate with staff. This is a great way to practice a new form of communication.**
- 3. Infinite Campus should be used by students and parents to monitor grades frequently.**
- 4. Middle school students will also be responsible for collecting their work for advanced admit passes.**
- 5. Students are responsible for moving to classes on time and being prepared for each class.**

Challenges in Middle School:

- Students will be transitioning to seven different classes a day. Students may need extra assistance with organization and transitions in a larger building.**
- Multiple elementary schools merge into WMS, there will be new peers and new teachers. Students may need extra support surrounding social pressure to fit in and navigate new teacher expectations.**
- Middle school students often experience many adolescent changes that are unfamiliar and can cause anxiety. Students will need positive support that provides open communication.**

EQUAL EDUCATION, NONDISCRIMINATION

The District will make equal educational opportunities available for all students without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, ethnicity, language barrier, religious belief, physical or mental handicap or disability, economic or social condition, actual or potential marital or parental status. No student will be denied equal access to programs, activities, services, or benefits or be limited in the exercise of any right, privilege, or advantage, or denied equal access to educational and extracurricular programs and activities.

• Release of “Directory Information”

*“Regarding student records, federal law requires that ‘directory information’ on my child be released by the District to anyone who requests it unless I object in writing to the release of this information. This includes release of directory information to military recruiters and post-secondary institutions. This objection must be filed within ten school days of the time this handbook was given to my child. Directory information ordinarily includes the student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, photographs, dates of attendance, awards received in school, and most recent previous school attended. **This information needs to be consistent with Policy 3600P, 3600F1, and 3600F2.***

In exercising my right to limit release of this information, I have completed the Student Directory Information Notification and returned it to the school.

Rights concerning a Student’s School Records

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

1. The right to inspect and copy the student’s education records, within a reasonable time from the day the District receives a request for access.
2. The right to request amendment of the student’s education records which the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, irrelevant, or improper.
3. The right to permit disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA or state law authorizes disclosure without consent.
4. The right to a copy of any school student record proposed to be destroyed or deleted.
5. The right to prohibit the release of directory information concerning the parent’s/ guardian’s child.
6. The right to request that information not be released to military recruiters and/or institutions of higher education.
7. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is essential for the student to make the most of his or her education — to benefit from teacher-led activities, to build each day’s learning on that of the previous day, and to grow as an individual.

State law requires:

- A student between the ages of 7 and 16 **must** attend school unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused.

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission, from any class or from required special programs, will be considered truant and subject to disciplinary action. Truancy may also result in assessment of a penalty by a court of law against the student and his or her parents. See Policy 3122, and 3123.

Medical absences verified by documentation (doctor’s appointments, dental appointments, counseling sessions) are not counted toward the number of regular absences.

Ten-Day Attendance Policy: In the event a student is absent ten or more days in a semester (medically verified and school sponsored activity absences will not count against the student) the appropriate notification procedures will be made to Parents, County Attorney, and Department of Family Services.

In the case of a planned absence, the parent or guardian should notify the office prior to the absence. The student may then get an advance admit for the office to take to his/her teachers to sign and get homework in advance.

Being absent from a class or classes without permission is unacceptable and considered an act of truancy. There is no reason for cutting or skipping class and doing so will result in disciplinary action and parent notification. A student who is absent for these reasons may receive a zero for classes missed, and will make up the class time missed.

BULLYING/HARASSMENT/INTIMIDATION/HAZING

Bullying, harassment, intimidation, or hazing, by students, staff, or third parties, is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated. "Bullying" means any harassment, intimidation, hazing, or threatening, insulting, or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal, or electronic communication (“cyberbullying”) or threat directed against a student that is persistent, severe, or repeated, and that substantially interferes with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, that takes place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation, at any official school bus stop, or anywhere conduct may reasonably be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a student or staff member or an interference with school purposes or an educational function. All complaints about behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. Retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports or is thought to have reported a violation, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry. [See Policy 3226]

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The school is not liable for lost or stolen cell phones, tablets, Ipods or any other electronic devices brought to school. **From the time students enter the building to the time the student leaves the building,** cell phones, Ipods, smart watches (if being used as cell phones), smart glasses (if they are being used as cell phones or listening devices) etc... **must be turned off** and kept in their lockers, not on their person. They may also be brought to the office (first thing in the morning) for safekeeping until after school. Violation of this policy will lead to the following consequences:

1st Offense- Device turned into the office, issued a warning.

2nd Offense- Device turned into the office, parents called, detention issued.

3rd Offense- Device turned into the office every morning for a week, parents called, short term ISS.

At no time will any student operate a cell phone or other electronic device with video capabilities in a locker room, bathroom, or other location where such operation may violate the privacy rights of another person. Disciplinary action may follow.

On activity trips students may be asked by the Advisor/Coach to turn their phones or any other camera/video device into the coach for safe keeping and also to prevent them from abuse on the bus and the locker rooms. Phones will be returned upon arrival back to Miles City. Any students who fail to turn in their device will not participate in the event and/or next event.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Teachers will send their class expectations home to parents during the 1st week of the start of a new class. This will include homework and behavioral expectations as well as other pertinent information to better prepare the student and parent for the school year. If there are any questions, do not hesitate to contact the teacher or school.

COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS

Students and parents are encouraged to keep in communication with teachers regarding their educational progress or other items of importance. Email and phone calls (outside of instructional time) are appropriate measures of communication, and appointments may also be made to meet with teachers. Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled four (4) times per school year on the District's Master Calendar, and families are encouraged to attend. We appreciate family involvement in the educational process.

COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS / PARENTS

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed simply — by a phone call or a conference with the teacher. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the District has adopted a uniform complaint procedure policy at 1700 in the District's policy manual. In general, a parent or student should first discuss the complaint with the individual involved. If unresolved, a written complaint and a request for a conference should be sent to the Principal. If still unresolved, the matter may be referred to the Superintendent. Under some circumstances, the District provides for the complaint to be presented to the Board of Trustees in the event the matter cannot be resolved at the administrative level.

Some complaints require different procedures. Any building office or the Superintendent's office can provide information regarding specific processes for filing complaints. Additional information can also be found in the designated Board policy, 1700, available on the website.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

To prepare students for an increasingly computerized society, the District has made a substantial investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these resources; violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action. Students and parents should be aware that electronic communications using District computers and accounts are not private and may be monitored by District staff.

[For additional information, see policy 3612, 3612P]

CONDUCT

In order for students to take advantage of available learning opportunities and to be productive members of our campus community, each student is expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy — even when others do not.
- Behave in a responsible manner, always exercising self-discipline.
- Attend all classes, regularly and on time.
- Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class.
- Meet District or building standards of grooming and dress.
- Obey all building and classroom rules.
- Respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, and other District staff.
- Respect the property of others, including District property and facilities.
- Cooperate with or assist the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.

The Board grants authority to a teacher or principal to hold a student to strict accountability for disorderly conduct in a school building, on property owned or leased by a school district, on a school bus, on the way to or from school, or during intermission or recess.

Disciplinary action may be taken against any student guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct, including but not limited to instances set forth below:

- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling tobacco products, and alternative nicotine and vapor products as defined in 16-11-302, MCA.
- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling alcoholic beverages, including powdered alcohol. Students who may be under the influence of alcohol will not be permitted to attend school functions and will be treated as though they had alcohol in their possession.
- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling drug paraphernalia, illegal drugs, marijuana, controlled substances, or any substance which is represented to be or looks like a narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, stimulant, depressant, or intoxicant of any kind, including such substances that contain chemicals which produce the same effect of illegal substances including but not limited to Spice and K2. Students who may be under the influence of such substances will not be permitted to attend school functions and will be treated as though they had drugs in their possession.

- Using, possessing, controlling, or transferring a firearm or other weapon in violation of Policy 3311.
- Using, possessing, controlling, or transferring any object that reasonably could be considered or used as a weapon as referred to in Policy 3311.
- Disobeying directives from staff members or school officials or disobeying rules and regulations governing student conduct.
- Using violence, force, noise, coercion, threats, intimidation, fear, or other comparable conduct toward anyone or urging other students to engage in such conduct.
- Causing or attempting to cause damage to, or stealing or attempting to steal, school property or another person's property.
- Engaging in any activity that constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function or any other disruptive activity.
- Unexcused absenteeism. Truancy statutes and Board policy will be utilized for chronic and habitual truants.
- Intimidation, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, hazing or bullying; or retaliation against any person who alleged misconduct under Policy 3225 or 3226 or participated in an investigation into alleged misconduct under Policy 3225 or 3226.
- Defaces or damages any school building, school grounds, furniture, equipment, or book belonging to the district.
- Forging any signature or making any false entry or attempting to authorize any document used or intended to be used in connection with the operation of a school.
- Engaging in academic misconduct which may include but is not limited to: cheating, unauthorized sharing of exam responses or graded assignment work; plagiarism, accessing websites or electronic resources without authorization to complete assigned coursework, and any other act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student.

These grounds stated above for disciplinary action apply whenever a student's conduct is reasonably related to school or school activities, including but not limited to the circumstances set forth below:

- On school grounds before, during, or after school hours or at any other time when school is being used by a school group.
- Off school grounds at a school-sponsored activity or event or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school.
- Travel to and from school or a school activity, function, or event.
- Anywhere conduct may reasonably be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of bullying of a staff member or student, or an interference with school purposes or an educational function.

COUNSELING

Personal Counseling

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns.

Please note: The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent, unless required by state or federal law for special education purposes.

DANCES

Dances may be held a few times a year at the discretion of the Supervisor and the Principal. School sponsored dances must be approved by the Principal.

1. Dances are limited to 7th and 8th graders enrolled in Washington Middle School. 6th graders may also be allowed to have a dance but may not be as frequent.
2. All rules that apply to school behavior also apply to dances. Phones will be turned in to a designated staff member and will not be allowed in the gym. The school dress code still applies.
3. Students who leave the dance will not be readmitted and parents will be notified.
4. Students who are asked to leave the dance will not be allowed to attend the next dance or future dances, depending on the offense.
5. Students who are not at school the day of the dance because of suspension, unexcused absence, parent excused absence, etc. will not be allowed to the dance that day.
6. Social Probation may be applied as a disciplinary consequence.

DISCIPLINE

Disciplinary Measures

Disciplinary measures include but are not limited to:

- Expulsion
- Suspension
- Detention
- Clean-up duty
- Loss of student privileges
- Loss of bus privileges
- Notification to juvenile authorities and/or police
- Restitution for damages to school property

No District employee or person engaged by the District may inflict or have cause to inflict corporal punishment on a student. Corporal punishment does not include reasonable force District personnel are permitted to use as needed to maintain safety for other students, school personnel, or other persons or for the purpose of self-defense.

Detention:

Four types of detention:

1. Morning detention- Served from 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m.
2. Lunch detention- Student eats lunch and spends recess time in the detention room.
3. Detention with teacher after school- Student stays with teacher until 4:15 pm.
4. ~~Required Friday School~~

All detentions must be served. Any student who is not cooperative in or is tardy for detention will receive no credit for the time served.

Step 1- Student receives notice of the detention. Teacher notifies the parents.

Step 2- If not served, detention is doubled. Parents notified.

Step 3- If both days are not served, ISS (in school suspension) one day, parents notified. Students receiving ISS are not released until 4:15 p.m. Students may be suspended on the last day of the school year for any unserved detentions or detentions issued the last two days of the school year.

Probation:

An allotted period of time will be given to a student by the administrator to correct an infraction of a school regulation.

Social Probation:

The student may not be allowed to participate in or attend any extra-curricular activities, lunchtime recess, or be allowed on the playground after school. The time frame will be at the discretion of the principal.

In-School Suspension (ISS):

The student is permitted to come to school but is placed in a confined area for the school day. Students will be released at 4:20 p.m. Students will receive credit for school work completed during the suspension. Students are expected to complete all their coursework while in ISS to receive credit for time in ISS. Excessive ISS could result in OSS.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS):

The student is sent home and not allowed to attend class. (Policy 3300) Students under suspension are not permitted to be on school property or participate in any school-sponsored activities during the period of suspension. Violation of this rule may lead to additional days of OSS and/or trespassing charges. It will be the responsibility of the parent to pick up and return student's assignments in a timely manner.

Out-of-School Placement:

The student is not allowed to attend school for a specified period of time, but will be provided the books and assignments necessary to meet his/her obligation to pass the core subjects. It will be the responsibility of the parents to pick up and return the student's assignments.

Expulsion:

A student is removed from the Miles City School District for a specified period. This requires the recommendation to the Superintendent and Board action. (Policy 3300)

Non-Disciplinary Measures

The Superintendent or designee is authorized to assign a student to non-disciplinary offsite instruction pending the results of an investigation or for reasons related to the safety or well-being of students and staff. During the period of non-disciplinary offsite instruction, the student will be permitted to complete all assigned schoolwork for full credit. The assignment of non-disciplinary offsite instruction does not preclude the Superintendent or designee from disciplining a student who has, after investigation, been found to have violated a School District policy, rule, or handbook provision.

Delegation of Authority

The Board grants authority to any teacher and to any other school personnel to impose on students under

their charge any disciplinary measure, other than suspension or expulsion, corporal punishment, or in-school suspension, that is appropriate and in accordance with policies and rules on student discipline. The Board authorizes teachers to remove students from classrooms for disruptive behavior.

Disciplinary Action:

1. Academic Honesty Violation per District Policy 3310P (Including but not limited to inappropriate use of AI, cheating, plagiarism)

Any student found cheating on daily work or on a test will receive the following consequences:

- 1st Offense- Detention
- 2nd Offense- Short term ISS
- 3rd Offense- Short term OSS

Teachers will document the cheating incident, report this to the principal and contact the parents. All students will redo homework or retake tests after school in the presence of the teacher for a partial grade. The student will be responsible for scheduling the retake with the teacher.

2. Attendance

Truancy- Being absent from a class or classes without permission is unacceptable and considered an act of truancy.

1st offense-Detention time equal to time truant, parents notified.

2nd offense-One to three days ISS or OSS. Parent conference. Juvenile authorities and county attorneys may be notified. Friday School may be required.

3. **Tardy Policy-** There are two types of tardies recognized by the school: *unexcused tardy* and *medically verified tardy*. Please note that tardies cannot be excused by a parent note or phone call; only medical documentation will be accepted to verify a tardy.

After the 5th cumulative tardy at WMS, and each tardy thereafter in a quarter, a student will be required to serve a 30 minute lunch detention. Cumulative refers to the total number of tardies overall, not per class period. Chronic tardiness may warrant a parent/guardian and the student to meet with administration to create a customized plan for the student. Bell ringer grading opportunities and/or participation points missed due to tardiness may only be made up on the students' own time (outside of school hours, during detention, during open Fridays, etc.), according to the teacher's late work policy. Per the Activities Handbook, tardies affecting eligibility to participate in activities must be made up within two (2) days of being issued in order to be cleared for activities.

4. Insubordination or Willful Disobedience

1st Offense- One to three days detention or suspension depending on the severity

2nd Offense- ISS or OSS depending on severity, Parent/Student/Principal conference

3rd Offense- Long term OSS

5. Unacceptable Language or Gestures

1st Offense- Detention based on severity of situation

2nd Offense- Increased detention or ISS, Parent notified

6. Unacceptable Language Directed at a Staff Member

- 1st Offense- Detention to ISS depending on severity
- 2nd Offense-One to three days OSS, Legal authorities may be contacted.
- 3rd Offense- Long term suspension

7. Use or Possession of Drugs or Alcohol

The use of drugs or any form of beverages containing alcohol by a student, singly or in a group, is expressly forbidden. This policy covers all school functions on school premises, such as games, dances, practices, etc. or any trips attended by WMS students when they are under school sponsorship whether or not the student is on a school bus or in private or public transportation. Use shall be defined as unlawfully manufacturing, dispensing, distributing, possessing, using or being under the influence of a controlled substance or misused OTC substance, including but not limited to alcohol and/or marijuana while on School District premises or while performing work for the District, including students possessing a “medical marijuana” card.

- 1st Offense- 3 days OSS, parent/student/school conference, police notified.
- 2nd Offense- 5 days OSS parent/student/school conference, police notified.
- 3rd Offense- Recommendation to the Superintendent for expulsion, police notified.

8. Sale of Drugs or Alcohol

A student caught dealing drugs or alcohol will be long term suspended with recommendation to the Board of Trustees for expulsion. Police will be notified.

9. Use or Possession of Tobacco/Nicotine Products

The use of/possession of tobacco is forbidden. This includes electronic cigarettes, electronic vapor devices, vapor fluids and water pipes to absorb nicotine. This policy covers all functions on school premises, including games, dances, practices, etc. or any trips attended by WMS students when they are under school sponsorship whether or not the student is on a school bus or in private or public transportation.

- 1st Offense- 3 days OSS parent/student/school conference, police notified
- 2nd Offense-5 days of OSS parent/student/school conference, police notified
- 3rd Offense- 8 days of OSS parent/student/school conference, police notified

10. Fighting or Excessive Physical Force

Depending upon the severity of the act, where and why the fight occurred:

- 1st Offense- Short term ISS or one day OSS, parents notified
- 2nd Offense- Short term suspension. Parent conference for readmission.
- 3rd Offense- Long term suspension. Student may return only with a signed contract.

Any fight, assault, or excessive physical force may lead to legal authorities being contacted.

11. Sexual Harassment/Indecent Exposure/Depantsing

- 1st Offense- 1 to 3 days OSS
- 2nd Offense- Long term OSS, parent/student/school conference, police notified

12. Vandalism

Writing on desks, lockers, etc. that is not permanent defacement of property may result in cleaning the property and/or detention. Willful damage to or destruction of school property or personal property will result in restitution and depending on the severity of the act, 1 to 3 days of OSS.

13. Stealing or Extortion

- 1st Offense- Short term suspension, parents notified, return or replace missing items, police notified
- 2nd Offense- Long term suspension, restitution, police notified.

14. Class Disruption

- 1st Offense- Office referral, teacher notifies parents, detention issued.
- 2nd Offense- Office referral, teacher notifies parents, detention issued.
- 3rd Offense- Short term ISS or OSS

15. Inappropriate Display of Affection

- 1st Offense- Conference with Principal, parents notified
- 2nd Offense- Short term ISS
- 3rd Offense- Short term OSS

16. Weapons/Firearms (See Weapons Section)

17. Weapons other than Firearms (Students are prohibited from possessing knives of any size on campus)

- 1st Offense- Detention to OSS depending on item confiscated and situation; item may be returned to parent
- 2nd Offense- ISS to OSS depending on item confiscated and situation; item may be returned to parent
- 3rd Offense- OSS to recommendation for expulsion, depending on the item confiscated and situation; item may be returned to parent

18. Willful Disregard for Safety of Others

Throwing snowballs or any other objects that are potentially dangerous, shooting rubber bands or darts, pushing students, etc. will result in detention. Continued disregard will result in suspension.

19. Threaten to Kill

A student who threatens his/her life or the life of another student or the life of school personnel, will be suspended from school until an evaluation relating to the probability or potentiality for violence is completed.

DRESS CODE

The District's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards (refer to Policy 3224). Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following guidelines:

1. Skirts, skirt slits, shorts and dresses should be no shorter than mid-thigh in length (to the fingertips). If skirts, shorts or dresses are found to be too revealing, then the student will be asked to change into something else.
2. Shortened shirts including half-shirts, and slit sided shirts are unacceptable and may not be worn. Mesh shirts will only be allowed if a solid shirt is worn underneath. All shirts must cover the chest and midsection of the body (front and back) with no cleavage or bra straps showing. Shirt and pants must meet and the midriff not show.
3. No clothing or jewelry, such as bracelets, will be allowed that are printed with profane language, or advertisements of alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs, biased comments, gang insignia, or inappropriate intent, or offensive sayings.
4. Clothing worn inappropriately is unacceptable. For example, "sagging" pants, underwear showing, etc....
5. No sunglasses, hats, or head apparel, including sweatshirt hoods will be worn in the school building. Hats should be kept in lockers and not taken to class.
6. No spikes, chains, or other potential dangerous "hardware" will be worn or carried.
7. No revealing pajamas or slippers.

8. Appropriate dress also means appropriate to the weather conditions, as students will be going outside for lunch recess. As a rule of thumb, students will be outside in the morning and noon if the wind chill is zero or above. The morning entry bell will not ring earlier than 7:45 unless there are enough staff members present for supervision. If it is too cold to stand outside, do not come to school too much earlier than the bell. No shorts will be allowed if the projected day time temperature is below freezing (32 F).

Exceptions to the dress code may be made for school-sponsored dress-up days.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Please note: Student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and cheerleading and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior — including consequences for misbehavior — that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the administrator will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization.

All students participating in extracurricular activities **must have** the following **prior** to the first practice:

- A required physical.
- An Assumption of Risk statement signed by the parent.
- A Permission to Participate form (sign-off).
- An updated Medical information form.
- A Concussion Education and Compliance form signed by the student athlete and parent.

Details about extracurricular activity participation are outlined in the Student Activity Handbook.

FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds and are at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Participation fees for extracurricular activities.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the District.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books and fees for lost or damaged textbooks.

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the Principal.

A school district may withhold the grades, diploma, or transcripts of a current or former pupil who is responsible for the cost of school materials, unpaid lunch fees, or the loss or damage of school property until the pupil or the pupil's parent or guardian satisfies the obligation.

(Refer to Policy 3520)

FIREARMS AND WEAPONS

It is the policy of the Miles City Unified School District to comply with the federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994 and state law 20-5-202 (2), MCA, pertaining to students who bring a firearm to, or possess a firearm at, any setting that is under the control and supervision of the school district. In accordance with 20-5-202 (3), MCA, a teacher, superintendent, or a principal shall suspend immediately for good cause a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to, or possess a firearm at, any setting that is under the control and supervision of the school district. In accordance with Montana law, a student who is determined to have brought a firearm to, or possess a firearm at, any setting that is under the control and supervision of the school district must be expelled from school for a period of not less than 1 year unless modified in accordance with District policy. Any disciplinary hearing conducted under this section will honor due process rights outlined in state law and Policy 3311.

For the purposes of the firearms, the term “firearm” means (A) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (B) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (C) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (D) any destructive device pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 921 (4).

Possession of Weapons other than Firearms

The District does not allow weapons on school property. Any student found to have possessed, used or transferred a weapon on school property will be subject to discipline in accordance with the District’s discipline policy. For purposes of this section, “weapon” means any object, device, or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury, including but not limited to air guns; pellet guns; BB guns; fake (facsimile) weapons; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; nunchucks (also known as nunchucks); throwing stars; explosives; fireworks; mace or other propellants; stun guns; ammunition; poisons; chains; arrows; and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon

Refer to Policy 3311

FOOD/BEVERAGES

Any food or beverage brought into school must adhere to District Policy and/or State and/or Federal guidelines. Coffee, energy drinks and soda are not allowed.

FRIDAY SCHOOL

Periodic, required Friday school may be assigned to students by administration due to failing grades, chronic absenteeism, chronic tardiness, unserved detention/ISS time.

HOMEWORK

Homework is a constructive tool in the teaching/learning process when geared to the needs and abilities of students. Purposeful assignments not only enhance student achievement, but also develop self-discipline and associated good working habits.

Teachers may give homework to students to aid in the student's educational development. Homework should be an application or adaptation of a classroom experience, and should not be assigned for disciplinary purposes.

Make-up work: Assignments will be posted electronically for any student who is absent two or more days. Students who have been sick will have two days to make up the work. Consecutive absences of three or more days will have extra time to make up the work; the number of days will be at the discretion of the teacher and will be encouraged to attend the after school program. Students who will be gone for activities must collect their work before they leave for the activity. At the end of a grading period, work must be turned in within the time frame given by the teacher. Grades will be updated and a new report card will be printed at that time.

Late work: Late work will be accepted at the discretion of the teacher as outlined in the classroom expectations.

IMMUNIZATION

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical or religious reasons, the student will not be immunized. The immunizations required are: diphtheria, pertussis, rubeola (measles), rubella, mumps, poliomyelitis and tetanus.

A student who transfers into the District may photocopy immunization records in the possession of the school of origin. The District will accept the photocopy as evidence of the immunization. Within thirty (30) days after a transferring student ceases attendance at the school of origin, the District must receive the original immunization records for the student who transfers into the District.

If a student's religious beliefs conflict with the requirement that the student be immunized, the student must present a statement signed by the student (or by the parent, if the student is a minor) stating that immunization conflicts with the beliefs and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the student is an adherent or member. This statement must be renewed yearly.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a Montana licensed or certified health care provider stating the immunization required would not be considered safe. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition. The statement for an exemption shall be maintained as part of the student's immunization record in accordance with FERPA as specified in Policy 3600P.

[For further information, see policy 3413]

LUNCH

WMS is a closed campus. All students are expected to eat lunch in the cafeteria at school. Students can eat hot lunch from our cafeteria or bring lunch from home. If a parent wishes to take their child out for lunch, they must call the school and sign the "Lunch Pass". Only a parent or legal guardian is allowed to sign the pass.

The District participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced lunches daily. Free and reduced-price lunches are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. Forms will be sent home at the beginning of the year, or can be found on the school website.

WMS complies with Federal USDA policies on meal charging and debt collection. All meal charges must be paid directly to the Miles City Unified School District. If a student is without meal money, the

administration will take action deemed necessary to collect unpaid meal charges while still meeting the nutritional needs of the student. Parents are responsible for meal payments to the food service program. Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parents at regular intervals during the school year. Parents and students can also track balances online via Infinite Campus. [Policy 8205]

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

A student who has authorization to possess and self-administer medication must have completed and filed, with the office, either a Montana Authorization to Carry and Self-Administer Medication or a Montana Authorization to Possess or Self-Administer Asthma, Severe Allergy, or Anaphylaxis Medication form. Details regarding self-administration of medication are available at the office as outlined in Policy 3416, 3416F1

Any other medications must be turned in to the office and appropriate paperwork filled out.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

The decision to promote a student to the next grade level shall be based on successful completion of the curriculum, attendance, performance based on standard achievement tests or other testing. A student shall not be promoted or retained based on age or other social reason not related to academic performance.

Recommendation for retention will be based upon one or both of the following criteria:

1. A student fails to pass required core classes taken during the school year. This includes the following subjects: math, science, English, social studies and physical education.
2. A student's scores on district and state testing.
3. Whether or not retention will provide the appropriate placement for the student.

The final decision for promotion or retention will be made by the teachers and Principal.

[Policy 2421]

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

A student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day except with permission from the principal or designee and according to the building sign-out procedures.

If a student will need to leave school during the day his or her parent must call the school. A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the office. The administrator will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and the student's parents will be notified.

REPORT CARDS AND CONFERENCES

Report cards are issued to parents after the end of each quarter. Parents and students are encouraged to log in to Infinite Campus to check grades on a regular basis. Parent teacher conferences will be held in the fall and in the spring and parents will be given the opportunity to schedule a time with their student's teachers.

SAFETY

Accident Prevention

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the District. Although the District has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, coaches or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report safety hazards, such as intruders on campus.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other District employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

If injured while at school or at a school sponsored activity, contact your teacher, advisor, or coach and have them fill out the district's injury report form as soon as possible. This form can be obtained in the school office. (Form 3431F)

Students MUST tell the coach/sponsor of the injury so that the coach/sponsor can file an accident report.

Accident Insurance

The school district **does not** provide accident or medical insurance coverage for students. Insurance coverage may be purchased by parents through a private company.

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school will need to have written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment and information about allergies to medications, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up to date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the office to update any information.

Disaster Drills and Other Emergencies

From time to time, students, teachers, and other District employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner. [Policy 8301]

Lockdown Terminology and Procedures

Lockdown

1. Assume there is an active threat.
2. Gather students close by in the halls, lock your doors.
3. Shut blinds and get away from doors and windows.
4. Remain quiet.
5. Listen for "specifics" over the intercom regarding the threat.
6. Phone calls to the school will not be answered. The police will communicate with the school through administrator (or specific designee) cell phone.
7. Only the police or an administrator give permission to end the lock down.
8. NO ONE will be allowed to enter or leave the building.
9. Teachers will keep cell phones if able for communication. They will NOT text or call parents or anyone outside of the school.
10. Do not allow students to use their cell phones.
11. As soon as the situation and circumstances allow, School Messenger will be used to send parents information about the release of students, the situation, etc.

***Create an "emergency plan" if you need to exit the building IMMEDIATELY. This would not be a fire drill, but in the case of an immediate threat where the evacuation of your classroom is necessary.

Evacuation

1. If the school grounds have to be evacuated, students will be walked to designated area.
2. Parents will be notified of the student release procedure as soon as the situation and circumstances allow.
3. Students should leave their fire exit unless notified otherwise.

Shelter in Place

1. We can move about freely in our building.
2. All doors are locked in the building and identification/purpose required to gain entry.
3. Please keep classroom doors shut and locked.
4. All students and student groups may not leave the building including student aides.
5. Administration will contact bus drivers/lunch drivers on their course of action.
6. If a threat is active at lunchtime, we keep the students and order lunch in.
 - a. Students will get lunch and eat in their 5th period class.
 - b. We may have to serve lunch in those classes(i.e. PB and J sandwich)
 - c. If we go into shelter in place during lunch, teachers who are in the building will be asked to go and monitor the nearest door.
7. Please do not answer texts or text parents. We do not want to escalate the situation.
8. We will tell students and teachers over the intercom that we are in shelter in place.
9. As soon as the situation and circumstances allow, School Messenger will be used to send parents information about the release of students, the situation, etc.
10. Students will not be released at the end of the day, unless a parent comes to pick them up in person.
11. Away activities will not load the bus until the shelter in place is over. Contact will be made with the opposing school to let them know the situation.
12. Home activities will be canceled if the shelter in place is still in place at the time of the game or by the time the away team is departing their school.

Hold in Place

1. The type of lockdown we are in when the drug dogs are here, there's a medical emergency, etc.
2. Keep all students in class until notified otherwise by intercom.
3. Do not let students use the restroom, go to their locker, etc.
4. Students just getting to school will be walked to their class by a staff member.

Emergency School-Closing Information:

In the case of emergency school closures, the District will notify parents via School Messenger. Notice may also be posted on the District Facebook page.

SEARCHES

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, District officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

Students' Desks and Lockers

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of the assigned desks and lockers. Students will be given the option to use a school distributed lock for their lockers.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by District policy, whether or not a student is present. Searches may also be conducted at random, in accordance with law and District policy. See policy 3231. The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Drug Detection Dogs

The Superintendent may request the assistance of law enforcement personnel or private individuals to conduct inspections and searches through the use of specially trained dogs.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (“SECTION 504”)

It is the intent of the District to ensure that students who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, evaluated, and provided with appropriate educational services. For those students who need or are believed to need special instruction and/or related services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the District shall establish and implement a system of procedural safeguards. The safeguards shall cover students' identification, evaluation, and educational placement. This system shall include: notice, an opportunity for the student's parent or legal guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with opportunity for participation by the student's parent or legal guardian, and a review procedure. Parents who feel their child may qualify for 504 should contact the school counselor to initiate an evaluation. Refer to Board Policy 2162 & 2162P.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT / SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION

The District encourages staff, parental, and student support in its efforts to address and prevent sexual harassment and sexual discrimination in the public schools. Students and/or parents will discuss their questions or concerns about the expectations in this area with the District Title IX coordinator. Call the school office to get this contact information.

For purposes of this section and the grievance process, “sexual harassment” means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A District employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the District 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 the District's education program or activity or;
3. “Sexual assault” as defined in 20 USC 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), “dating violence” as defined in 34 USC 12291(a)(10), “domestic violence” as defined in 34 USC 12291(a)(8) or “stalking” as defined in 34 USC 12291(a)(30).

All students are expected to treat other students and District employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop these behaviors when asked or told to stop. A substantiated complaint against a student or staff member will result in appropriate disciplinary action, according to the nature of the offense. Supportive measures are available to parties involved in Title IX investigations.

The District will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment by student(s) and will notify parents of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual discrimination by an employee. To the

greatest extent possible, complaints will be treated as confidential. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

A complaint alleging sexual harassment by another student or sexual harassment or sexual discrimination by a staff member may be presented by a student and/or parent in a conference with the Title IX coordinator. The parent or other advisor may accompany the student throughout the complaint process. The conference will be scheduled and held as soon as possible. The principal coordinator District will conduct an appropriate investigation in accordance with Policy 3225 and 3225P. The student will not be required to present a complaint to a person who is the subject of the complaint.

If the resolution of the complaint is not satisfactory the decision may be appealed in accordance with Policy 3225P.

For more information about the District's complaint procedure, see Policy 3225, 3225P, 3225F.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The District will provide a free appropriate public education and necessary related services to all children with disabilities residing within the District, as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), provisions of Montana law, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

For students eligible for services under IDEA, the District will follow procedures for identification, evaluation, placement, and delivery of service to children with disabilities, as provided in the current *Montana State Plan under Part B of IDEA*. Refer to Policy 2161 & 2161P.

Parents who feel their child may qualify for Special Education services should contact the building principal or Special Services Director to initiate an evaluation.

STUDENT GUIDELINES FOR SPORTING EVENTS AT WMS

While we encourage our students to attend our sporting events and support our teams and cheerleaders, certain behavior expectations must be followed.

1. When games are held after school, most of our activities begin at 4:30 p.m. On days when there are no events, students are expected to be off the playground by 4:05 p.m. On game days, only the students attending events may stay on the playground.
2. Students waiting outside must respect the rights of parents and patrons to enter the gym without distraction or disruption. Students causing problems outside will be asked to leave and will not attend the games. Further discipline may follow.
3. Students should be in the gym and seated in the student section before game time. Students are not allowed on the gym floor or in the emergency exits at the end of the bleachers. Students spitting, throwing objects, or otherwise being disrespectful will be asked to leave. Further disciplinary action may follow.
4. Students should not be loitering in the concession area or lobby while the games are in progress. Students should not congregate in the rest room at any time.
5. Show good sportsmanship at the games and support the teams and the cheerleaders. Have a good time and respect the rules.

STUDENT RECORDS

A student's school records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the District until the time the student withdraws or graduates. A copy of this record moves with the student from school to school. By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records, if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

Special Education Records

Parents of a student with disabilities who has been provided special education services by the District will be notified when any information that specifically identifies the student is no longer needed. If the parent requests destruction of the information and the time established by law for retention has expired, the records will be destroyed. However, if they expire, the material will be deleted from the records but the records will be maintained until the time has expired.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Substitute teachers will be afforded the same degree of respect and cooperation as that expected of the students toward the regular teacher. Substitutes are to be treated as a guest in our school. Failure to cooperate with a substitute will result in immediate discipline. Detention or ISS will be the result of not cooperating with a substitute.

TEXTBOOKS

Board-approved textbooks are provided free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return a book issued by the school or damaging a book issued by the school may be charged to replace the book.

TRANSPORTATION

School Sponsored

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. If the parents wish to transport their child home, they must sign out with the head coach BEFORE leaving the event. If the parent(s) wish for their child to be transported home by another person(s), they must gain prior approval with the Activities Director or Principal BEFORE leaving for the event. Permission WILL NOT be granted for any reason, if this request is made at the event or after the event concludes.

When riding school buses, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook.

Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus in an orderly manner at the designated bus stop nearest home.
- Keep feet and all objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus and before crossing in front of the bus.
- Remain seated while the bus is moving.

When students ride in a District van or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened at all times.

Misconduct will be punished and bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

VEHICLES

Students in the Middle School are not allowed to drive to school as it becomes a distraction and a safety issue. This includes all motorized means of transportation including motorcycles and scooters.

VIDEOTAPING OF STUDENTS

The District uses video cameras on District property to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors to District property, and to safeguard District facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent. Students in violation of Board policies, administrative regulations, building rules, or law shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Others may be referred to law enforcement agencies.

Video recordings may become a part of a student's educational record. The District shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws related to record maintenance and retention.

VISITORS

Parents and others are welcome to visit District schools. For the safety of those within the school, all visitors must first report to the principal's office. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

Receipt of Handbook

“I have received a copy of the Washington Middle School Student Handbook for 2023-2024. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year. I understand that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the handbook.”

Print name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____