



# THE MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL FOR MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

Both current and new employees should use this Employee Handbook as a ready reference concerning personnel questions regarding the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science. Additionally, the Handbook assures good management and fair treatment of all employees.

*Employee Handbook*

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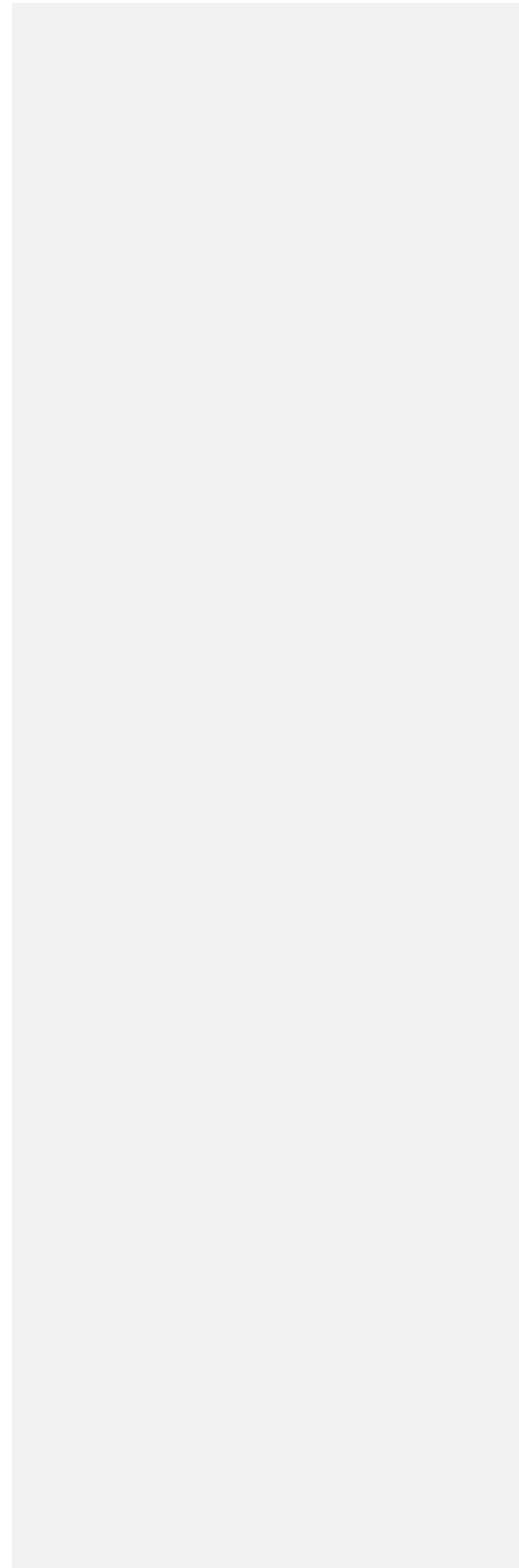
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## **GOVERNANCE**

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### **State Board of Education**



Mr. Glen East, Chair

Dr. Wendi Barrett  
Mrs. Mary Werner  
Dr. Ronnie McGehee

Mr. Matt Miller  
Mr. Bill Jacobs  
Mr. Charlie Fruge` (Student)

### **State Department of Education**

Mr. Michael D. Kent, State Superintendent of Education, Interim  
Dr. Donna Boone, Chief Academic Officer  
Dr. Marla Davis, Associate State Superintendent, Academic Liaison

### **MSMS Executive Leadership**

Dr. Donnie Cook	Executive Director (Superintendent)
Ms. Ginger Tedder	Director for Academic Affairs (Principal)
Ms. LeAnn Alexander	Director for Student Affairs
Mrs. Melanie Busby	Director for School Advancement
Mr. Matt Fondren	Director of Operations
Mrs. Amy Elsmore	Senior Executive Assistant

It is the intent of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science to comply with all provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and IDEA. The State Board of Education directs that no person shall on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or religion be discriminated against, excluded from, or denied the benefits of any program, opportunity, or activity. This section applies to all applicants for employment at the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science, present employees, and students.



## **INTRODUCTION AND HANDBOOK OVERVIEW**

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### **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK PURPOSE / INTERPRETATION**

Welcome to the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS). We believe the contribution of your skills, knowledge, and positive attitude is essential to the continued success and growth of MSMS. You are a valued employee; therefore, we encourage you to let your Director know about achievements as well as problems and your ideas for solving them. We believe in you and your contributions and hope you will take pride in being a member of our team.

This handbook was developed to provide information you will need for your job. It outlines expectations, policies, and programs, serving as a resource throughout your employment. You should not interpret this handbook or any other documents (such as benefits statements, performance evaluations, or any other written or verbal communications) as an employment agreement or a contract of employment (either expressed or implied).

This handbook is not intended to be all-inclusive, nor will it address every situation. Therefore, you are encouraged to address questions with your Director. The policies and other information contained in this handbook are subject to change at any time due to organizational needs. While MSMS will normally provide employees with advance notice of any change, we reserve the absolute right to alter these policies at any time, and from time to time without advance notice.

Questions regarding the content of this handbook can be addressed to your immediate Director.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to enhance the future of Mississippi in the global society by meeting the individual needs of gifted and talented students through providing innovative learning experiences and leadership development in a residential environment. In addition, we will provide quality educational leadership for other educators and aggressive outreach programs that impact students across Mississippi.

### **STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

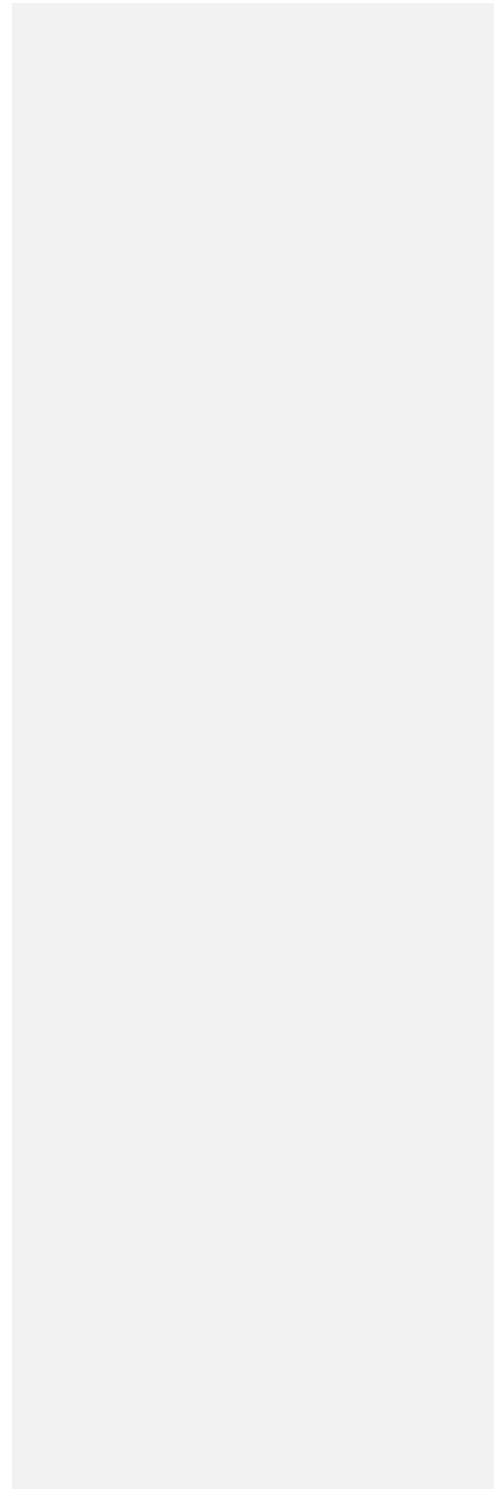
The principal academic function of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science is to provide high quality and innovative learning experiences to meet the individual needs of students from across the State of Mississippi who have met the requirements for admission. In accomplishing this purpose the school plays many roles.

The school's purpose is to develop the ultimate potential of each student intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically. In addition, each student is offered an opportunity to acquire an appreciation of cultural aspects of living through the school's curriculum and related activities.

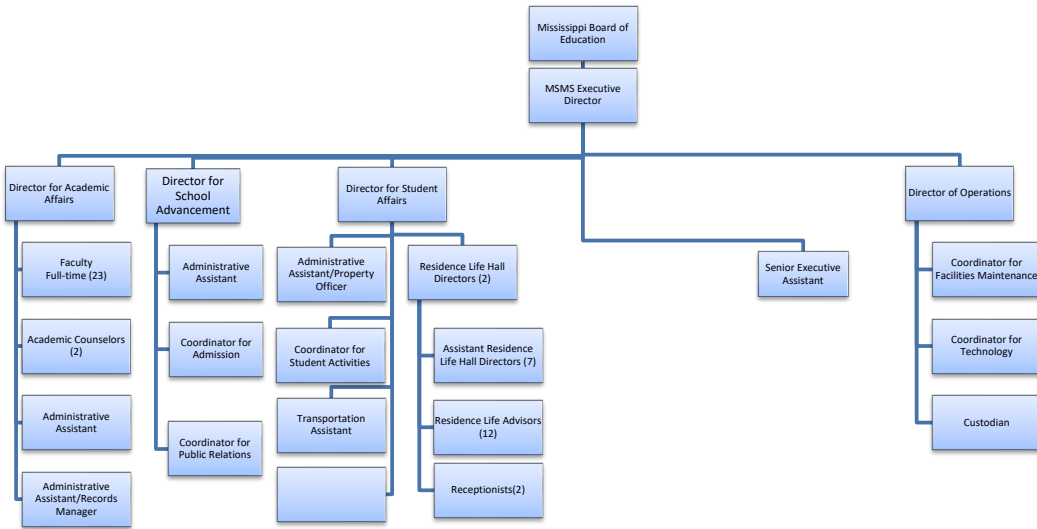
The learning process is supported by leadership from a quality-oriented school board, state department of education, administration, and staff.

MSMS supplements the home training by the example set by its staff and with its consistent policies of encouragement of personal responsibility and integrity of democratic ideals.

MSMS provides instructionally-focused organization to prepare its students for future educational and career opportunities. Preparation for college, employment, and service is offered; however, we emphasize that no secondary school is an end unto itself. .each is but a gateway to further learning.



## Mississippi School for Mathematics & Science Organization Chart



## CODE OF ETHICS

### PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

MSMS is a place dedicated to learning. Teachers, staff members, and administrators, as adults and professionals, teach young people by setting an example of excellence for students to follow. The expectation is that each employee, at all times, will reflect professionalism in behavior, attitude, and appearance.

Further Professional Expectations are that each employee will:

1. Arrive on time for all responsibilities or notify the administration that he/she will be late;
2. Be maximally available to assist students;
3. Attend all meetings required by your supervisor unless previously excused;
4. Perform extra-curricular duties as assigned or assumed;
5. Be responsible for all school property and equipment entrusted to him/her;
6. Prepare all records as directed by the rules and regulations of the state or required by supervisors;
7. Ensure that students are always properly supervised;
8. Report all student absences accurately and promptly, realizing that student welfare may depend on a prompt and accurate report;
9. Strive to interpret the work of the school fairly, honestly, and adequately to patrons at every opportunity;
10. Remain current in areas of job responsibility;
11. Strive at all times to maintain cordial relationships with the parent/guardian, keeping the parent/guardian informed of the student's progress and bringing issues to Student Concerns whenever necessary;
12. Carry out professional responsibilities without delegating them to students; and
13. Respect the rights of colleagues by (a) never asking students to enter employee-only areas (b) being respectful in sharing offices and classroom spaces and (c) using school-provided spaces and resources for professional tasks only.

### CORE VALUES

*Every decision made will be driven by the following values:*

- **ALL STUDENTS LEARNING:** MSMS is committed to all students learning and ensures that each student, to the best of his/her ability, will master the knowledge and develop the skills and attitudes essential for success in school and society.
- **COMPETENT AND CARING STAFF:** MSMS is committed to selecting, developing, and supporting the best possible staff who:
  - Understand and contribute to the learning process
  - Care about students
  - Perform at a high level
  - Respect and support others
  - Act ethically, professionally, and effectively
  - Communicate appropriately and effectively
- **RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES:** MSMS is committed to recognizing contributions to its multicultural community and to facilitating an appreciation of American heritage.

- **STAFF PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING:** MSMS is committed to making effective decisions through the extensive involvement of staff affected by the decision.
- **SAFE, ORDERLY, AND ATTRACTIVE ENVIRONMENT:** MSMS is committed to maintaining a safe, orderly, and attractive environment which promotes productivity and stimulates learning.
- **EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES:** MSMS is committed to aggressively seeking and creatively and effectively managing our resources. These include students, parents, community, finances, technology, time, facilities, and other physical resources.
- **EXCELLENCE IN ALL WE DO:** MSMS is committed to . . .
  - collective contribution to learning
  - high levels of performance
  - continuous improvement
  - pride throughout the organization

## COMMITMENT

The faculty and staff of MSMS accept the challenge of the profession, having chosen their destination individually and collectively. They recognize that a profession must accept responsibility for the conduct of its members and understand that conduct may be representative. To that end, faculty and staff understand they must keep the trust under which confidential information is exchanged and must interpret and use the writing of others and the findings of educational research with intellectual honesty. Above all, they must maintain integrity.

## PARENT RELATIONS

Parents of MSMS students may be unsure of their feelings regarding separation from their children. Please be considerate of their concerns and do everything to allay their fears regarding their children's academic and personal lives.

If a student is not performing well, or if a problem exists that needs parental attention, staff members should make timely communication. All parents need the assurance that their youngsters are in capable, caring hands.

## **EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

### **NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

It is the intent of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science to comply with all provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The State Board of Education directs that no person shall on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or religion be discriminated against or excluded from or denied the benefits of any program, opportunity, or activity. This section applies to all applicants for employment at the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science, present employees, and students.

The following person has been designated as the institutional representative to handle inquiries regarding the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science's nondiscrimination policies, the filing of grievances, and requests for copies of grievance procedures covering discrimination:

Director for School Advancement  
1100 College Street, MUW -1627  
Columbus, MS 39701  
(662) 329-7687

### **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science, in conjunction with the Mississippi University for Women, offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP offers several benefits to employees and their families such as:

- Short-term in-person, telephonic, and/or video-based counseling for issues such as relationships, workplace challenges, grief and loss, parenting, and many other concerns
- Assessment and referral for longer-term issues

Along with Work-Life, the EAP offers:

- Educational materials and website
- Confidentiality\*
- Services at no cost to you and your household members
- Referrals to your other benefits as appropriate

Additional information is available in the Office of the Executive Director.

### **CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

Emergency drills will be conducted to train students and all personnel in how to conduct themselves in an emergency situation. Students and employees will be notified of emergencies through a text message sent from the MSMS emergency notification system.

Inside the Hooper Academic Building, a siren will be initiated in addition to the text message.

The following rules will apply for **fire drills**:

- a. An alarm will be activated to signal the beginning of a fire drill.
- b. When the alarm sounds, students will leave the building in an orderly fashion under the supervision of employees. All MSMS staff and any visitors shall exit the buildings as well.
- c. Employees will follow the exit plan posted by the door in the building.
- d. Groups will file out quickly, without running. An employee will designate a student to lead the group, with the employee being the last person leave. The employee will take a copy of the roll when exiting.
- e. Once outside, roll will be called to ensure all students were evacuated. All employees will report missing students to the appropriate supervisor, who will then report to the appropriate Director.
- f. When the drill ends, students will resume normal activities. The drill should be conducted with as little disruption as possible. Problems will be reported in writing to the appropriate Director.

The following guidelines will apply for a **disaster/tornado drill**:

- a. A signal will be sounded for the beginning of the drill. All staff and students downstairs will go into the hallway and sit facing the wall with their hands on their knees. Staff and students upstairs will come downstairs into the hallway and follow the above procedure. Everyone should remain silent.

**Staff members will be responsible for students under their direction. Administrators will be responsible for checking the building before anyone is allowed to return to normal activities. At the conclusion, students and staff members will return to their normal activities as quickly and quietly as possible. The following guidelines will apply for intruder drills:**

- a. If you see students in the hallway or outside, pull them inside or into your room immediately.
- b. Lock doors and turn out lights.
- c. Move away from windows and sit in a low position close to the wall adjacent to the hallway. If you have interior rooms, use them to prevent being seen by the intruder.
- d. Remain quiet.
- e. Continue "lock down" until all clear has been announced.

The following guidelines will apply for earthquake drills:

- a. Avoid trying to exit the building.
- b. Be sure the door to your room is open to prevent jamming.
- c. Move away from windows and closer to interior walls.
- d. Take shelter under desks, tables, and heavy furniture.
- e. Remain calm.

## **REPORTING ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

### The Law

According to Mississippi Code § 97-5-51 (1972, annotated) the following people are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect: attorneys, doctors, dentists, interns, residents, nurses, psychologists, teachers, social workers, school principals, child's caregiver, ministers, law enforcement officers, or any other person having reasonable cause to suspect a child has been neglected or abused.

### Immunity

Persons making reports are protected by law from civil liability if they act in good faith. Absolute proof is not required prior to making a report. It is the responsibility of Child Protective Services to conduct its own investigation.

### Steps to follow after suspecting abuse:

1. Report concerns to an administrator or, in the absence of an administrator, to a counselor, who will then involve the appropriate agency representatives. **DO NOT** attempt to investigate the issue on your own.
2. If the student elects to share information, remain calm and non-judgmental. Reassure the student that he/she is not to blame for what happened.



## **ATTENDANCE PHILOSOPHY FOR STUDENTS**

**We believe that** regular attendance is a vital aspect of developing and maintaining a successful education experience. Regular attendance promotes a sense of responsibility, ensures educational continuity, and facilitates academic growth. Furthermore, daily attendance is important in that it is a measure reported by MSIS upon which allocations for textbooks, teacher professional development, and other resources are based.

**We believe that** students have the primary responsibility for their attendance, but both parents and school officials share in that responsibility. The expectations and procedures for attendance will be enforced in every instance.

## **STUDENT ACCIDENT OR ILLNESS**

Employees are responsible for the safety of all students under their supervision and must immediately report all student accidents or illnesses. No procedure can be pre-formulated for, and completely applicable in, all situations. The following is a general guideline and may be modified as individual situations occur:

1. The employee in charge of the class or activity or first on the scene when an injury or illness occurs will take charge.
2. The employee should remain calm and promptly decide what needs to be done to prevent the situation from worsening.
3. If the accident is serious, the employee should immediately summon an administrator by sending someone to the office to ask for help. If after normal school hours, the administrator on call should be contacted by telephone at home or via cell.
4. If first aid is needed, an employee with appropriate knowledge should administer first aid. The employee should make the student as comfortable as possible, but no medication should be administered that has not been pre-approved by the parent for the particular condition.
5. Upon notification, the administrator will attempt to call the parents.
6. If a parent cannot be located, the supervising employee will decide if it is appropriate to have the student transported to the emergency room. Administrators and parents will be notified immediately after this decision is made.
7. If necessary to transport the student to a hospital, the supervising employee will determine whether to use a school vehicle or an ambulance.
8. An injured or ill student should never be left unattended until a final disposition is made concerning the injury or illness.
9. The on-scene administrator will be responsible for all decisions concerning the injured or ill student and the notification of parents.
10. Prior to leaving school, the first responder should submit a written report to the office.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

**Sexual Harassment** means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- A. Submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education or a staff member's employment.
- B. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a person is used as a component of the basis for decisions affecting that person.
- C. The conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a person's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

This applies whether the harassment is between people of the same or different gender. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at or related to a person's gender, such as sexual gossip or personal comments of a sexual nature, sexually suggestive or foul language, sexual jokes, whistling, spreading rumors or lies of a sexual nature about someone, demanding sexual favors, forcing sexual activity by threat of punishment or offer of educational reward, obscene graffiti, display or sending of pornographic pictures, videos, or objects, offensive touching, pinching, grabbing, kissing or hugging or restraining someone's movement in a sexual way.

## ANTI-BULLYING AND HAZING POLICY

The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science strives to maintain a safe and civil learning environment for all employees. The purpose of this policy is to assist The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science in preventing and responding to acts of bullying, harassment, intimidation, violence, and other similar disruptive behavior. Students, faculty, and staff members can report incidents of bullying anonymously through an anonymous reporting tool located at [mysafeschool.themsms.org](https://mysafeschool.themsms.org).

### **Definition**

Bullying, hazing, or harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, that takes place on school property or at any school-sponsored function. **BULLYING** includes, but is not limited to; conduct by a student/employee/parent/other person against an employee that one can reasonably believe has the effect of:

- a) Harming an employee;
- b) Damaging an employee's property;
- c) Placing an employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or property; or
- d) Creating a hostile environment for an employee.

\*Hostile environment means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

No employee of MSMS shall permit, condone, or tolerate bullying. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of bullying is prohibited. False accusations or reports of bullying are prohibited.

### **Retaliation**

It is a separate and distinct violation of this policy for any member of the school community to retaliate against any person who reports alleged harassment or against any person who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing relating to such harassment. It is possible that an alleged harasser may be found to have violated this anti-retaliation provision even if the underlying complaint of harassment is not found to be a violation of this policy. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment and may be redressed through application of the same reporting, investigation, and enforcement procedures as for harassment. In addition, a person who knowingly makes a false report may be subject to the same action that The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science may take against any other individual who violated this policy. The term "false report" refers only to those made in bad faith and does not include a complaint that could not be corroborated or which did not rise to the level of unlawful harassment.

### **Consequences**

Any school employee or student who is found to have violated this policy may be subject to action including, but not limited to, warning, remedial training, education or counseling, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, termination, or discharge.

### **Reporting**

Any school employee, who observes, overhears or otherwise witnesses harassment, which may be unlawful, or to whom such harassment is reported, must take prompt and appropriate action to stop the harassment and to prevent its reoccurrence. A written report of the incident and the action taken by the school employee in response to it must also be given to the appropriate Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science harassment complaint official(s) designated to oversee the handling of harassment complaints.

In the event that the school employee is unable to personally take prompt and appropriate action, the employee must report the incident or complaint in writing to the appropriate Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science harassment complaint official(s) designated by this policy.

Any student who believes that he/she has witnessed or been the target of unlawful harassment as defined in this policy may bring their complaint to the attention of any school employee or the harassment complaint official. Any student who believes that any corrective action taken by a school employee was ineffective may bring their complaint to the attention of the harassment complaint officials: Director for Student Affairs or Director for School Advancement.

If one of the harassment complaint officials is the person alleged to be engaged in the harassment, the complaint shall be filed with one of the alternative officials or any other school employee the student chooses.

## **MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL FOR MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

### **PURPOSE**

This policy establishes the process by which employees may address a complaint or file a grievance regarding employment-related issues and by which the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science ("MSMS") may respond to complaints and grievances in the most effective manner.

This policy applies to all employees of MSMS. This policy does not modify the at-will status of administrative or non-administrative classified employees.

### **SECTION I: POLICY STATEMENT**

MSMS is committed to maintaining a positive and cooperative work environment for all employees. Accordingly, MSMS seeks to ensure that employees demonstrate mutual respect and that operational practices are conducted per established Board policies. While employees are encouraged to resolve issues through informal procedures, MSMS recognizes that occasionally more formal processes may be required. Therefore, MSMS shall establish a complaint and grievance process that provides for the fair and equitable treatment of employees seeking to resolve employment-related issues.

### **SECTION II: DEFINITIONS**

1. A "complaint" is a general expression of dissatisfaction/concern with an employment- related issue.
2. A "complainant" is any full-time employee filing a complaint.
3. The "complaint form" is the approved documentation on which a complaint may be filed.
4. The term "day" shall mean working school days and shall not include weekends, holidays, or vacation days.
5. A "full-time employee" is any person employed on a regular basis and working the number of hours designated as full-time for that position.
6. A "grievance" is a written claim by an employee of an alleged violation of a written MSMS policy/standardized practices or federal/state law.
7. A "grievant" is any full-time employee filing a written grievance.
8. Retaliation is an adverse employment action (i.e. compensation or employment status) taken by a manager or employer against an employee as a result of an employee filing a complaint or grievance.

### **SECTION III: EXCLUSIONS**

This policy shall not govern the following types of employee complaints, concerns, and/or grievances:

- Improper Governmental Activity
- Alleged Discrimination in Employment Practices
- Nonrenewal or Non-reemployment of Certified Employees
- Dismissal of classified, at-will employees by the Executive Director
- Matters prescribed by state or federal law

### **SECTION III: RETALIATION**

Any act of retaliation, including but not limited to harassment and/or discrimination against an employee complaining or filing a grievance in accordance with this policy, shall be prohibited by MSMS. Disciplinary measures up to and including termination from employment with MSMS shall apply to any employee acting in a retaliatory manner against another employee who complains or files a grievance under this policy.

### **SECTION IV: EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND CODE OF ETHICS**

All MSMS employee behavior shall conform to the expectations articulated in the MSMS' Employee Handbook Code of Ethics. Any certified employees shall also conform to the expectations articulated in the Educator Code of Ethics Standards of Conduct.

### **SECTION V: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR EMPLOYEES**

Complaints of violation of the MSMS Code of Ethics or policy regarding harassment may be made to the appropriate administrative officer without fear of reprisal. If the grievance concerns sexual harassment from an immediate supervisor, then the grievant should file a complaint with the Title IX Coordinator/ Federal Program Director. Should violations prove to be legitimate, the offending employee shall be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Any violations of the provisions of Title IX should be reported to your immediate supervisor.

An employee's failure to comply with the required timeframe contained in this policy prohibits the employee from using or exhausting the grievance procedure. An employee's failure to comply with or exhaust the grievance procedure does not relieve the agency of its responsibility to timely and appropriately address such issues, as necessary. Issues of concern to an employee that are not considered grievable may still require an immediate and appropriate response by the agency. Regarding grievances and complaints, the following procedure shall be followed:

#### **Level One**

1. All complaints or grievances shall be submitted in writing to the immediate supervisor of the grievant within ten (10) days of the act or omission complained of. The written statement shall contain, the time, place, and nature of the alleged act or omission and the state of federal law or board policy violated. The statement must be signed by the grievant. Within seven (7) days, the immediate supervisor shall meet with the grievant.

Within three days of the meeting, the immediate supervisor shall provide the grievant with the 1<sup>st</sup> level response in writing. This timeframe may be extended by agreement of the parties.

The written decision of the immediate supervisor shall be deemed to be accepted by the grievant unless the grievant notifies the Executive Director in writing within ten (10) days of the date of the written decision of the grievant's intention to appeal the written decision of the immediate supervisor.

If a complaint or grievance is against the immediate supervisor of the grievant, the complaint or grievance should be submitted to the Executive Director. If the complaint or grievance is against the Executive Director,

the complaint of grievance shall be submitted to the Associate Superintendent who oversees the State Schools.

#### **Level Two**

1. Upon receipt by the Executive Director of the written notice that the grievant intends to appeal the decision of his/her immediate supervisor, the Executive Director shall notify the grievant in writing within ten (10) days and shall advise the grievant of the date, time, and place upon which the matter will be considered by the Executive Director.
2. The written statement submitted by the grievant to his/her immediate supervisor in Level One shall form the basis of the grievance before the Executive Director. The grievant shall submit to the Executive Director in writing any and all additional information on his/her behalf which he/she desires no later than ten (10) prior to the date upon which the matter is scheduled for meeting with Executive Director.
3. In the event the grievant does not personally attend the meeting scheduled by the Executive Director, his/her failure to attend shall be deemed as an acceptance of the written decision rendered by his/her immediate supervisor.
4. The Executive Director shall render written decision to the grievant within ten (10) days of the date upon which the matter was heard.
5. If the complaint or grievance was originally submitted to the Executive Director, then it shall be appealed to the Associate Superintendent who oversees the State School. If the complaint or grievance was originally submitted to the Associate Superintendent who oversees the State Schools, then it shall be appealed to the State Superintendent of Education. The decision of the State Superintendent of Education shall be the final resolution of the matter.

#### **Level Three**

1. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the grievant at Level Two, or if the Executive Director does not render a decision within ten (10) days, the grievant may file a grievance with the Associate Superintendent who oversees the State Schools.
  2. If the grievance is not filed with the Associate Superintendent who oversees the State Schools within ten (10) days of the meeting at Level Two, the grievance shall be considered resolved.
  3. Within ten (10) days after receipt of the grievance, the Associate Superintendent who oversees the State Schools shall schedule a meeting on the grievance.
  4. For all complaints or grievances where the Executive Director is not the subject of the complaint or grievance, the decision of the Associate Superintendent shall be the final resolution of the matter.

#### **CLUB/ACTIVITY SPONSORSHIP**

During the hiring process for new employees, several factors are taken into consideration such as (1) the residential nature of the school, (2) the expectation that students participate in academic competitions and in innovative learning experiences, and (3) the need for programming to support academic, physical, social, emotional, and leadership development of students. Specifically, for faculty, these items were considered when developing a scale of teacher compensation unique to MSMS. Consequently, it is expected that faculty members who accept the challenge of teaching at MSMS will be committed not just to classroom instruction, but also to sponsoring various clubs, competition teams, and/or student organizations. All of these experiences are of supreme importance in

providing opportunities for students to interact and compete with other students. Employees will work collaboratively with the Directors for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to develop a club/organization meeting schedule that allows students to be maximally involved with minimal conflict. Clubs must be approved according to school policy.

Faculty and/or staff should be familiar with the MSMS policy on Student Organizations. Copies of this policy are available in the Office of Academic Affairs and Office of Student Affairs.

### FIELD TRIPS

All field trips are to be of an educational nature. Any employee who wishes to take students on a field trip must complete the *Field Trip Request Form*, available from the office, **at least two weeks prior to the date of the trip**. The form will include the estimated budget [registration/ticket fees, lodging, mileage, food, bus driver, etc.] and names/student ID's of projected student participants. Only completed forms will be considered.

Faculty/staff sponsors are reminded that:

- They should submit the *Field Trip Request Form* to the Office of Academic Affairs for approval. If approved, the Office of Academic Affairs will forward the form to the Office of Student Affairs to secure transportation. The bus will be assigned based upon the number of projected participants. The Office of Student Affairs reserves the right to change the bus assignment if the number of participants changes to ensure that the most economically feasible transportation is used.
- The following guidelines should be adhered to when budgeting for student meals:
  - A sponsor requesting a trip for which meals can be prepared by food service and safely transported in coolers [generally a one-day trip – one or two meals] should be prepared to arrange to pick up coolers/meals and should not request money to cover student food costs.
  - A sponsor requesting an overnight or multiple day trips should be prepared to arrange to pick up coolers/meals for day one and ask food service to provide nonperishable snacks to supplement means for subsequent days. A request for student food money should be made for day two and subsequent days of the trip.
  - In order to receive money for the students' food, employees must complete a Travel Authorization Form two weeks prior to the trip.

Once received by the Director for Academic Affairs, the request may be: (1) denied, (2) approved in full for all requested expenses, or (3) approved with partial approval of expenses, the remainder of which must be assumed by the students or sponsoring organization.

The sponsor submitting the request must supervise the trip if approved. Adequate supervision includes traveling with the students. Field trip sponsors must sign out the electronic tablet that has important student information in case of emergencies. All field trips must be approved by the Directors for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs and posted on the Activities calendar.

A list of students who are to go on approved field trips will be emailed to faculty at least one week prior to the field trip. If a teacher is concerned about the absence of a student because of academic difficulty or excessive prior

absences, the Director for Academic Affairs should be notified. The Director for Academic Affairs will be the sole authority in matters involving students being released from class and tutorials. Report all misconduct of any type to the Director for Student Affairs.

It is imperative that students attend classes unless excused by the Academic Office. The sponsoring faculty/staff member of each field trip will be responsible for providing to the Office of Student Affairs a list of student participants at the time of departure. Any students on the original travel list who do not actually travel will be considered unexcused if they do not attend classes.

Staff members are expected to be cautious while planning field trips during regular class hours and initiate plans only after having obtained approval from the Director for Academic Affairs. Trips should not be planned close to the end of the nine weeks or semester.

## FUNDRAISING POLICY

All student fundraising projects must be submitted to the sponsor of the organization. If approved by the sponsor, the sponsor will in turn submit the request to either the Director for Academic Affairs or Director for Student Affairs for final approval. Requests should be submitted two (2) weeks in advance of the proposed activity. Purchases made for fundraising without administrative approval shall become the financial responsibility of the individual employee. Reimbursements will only be given to employees. The following procedures shall be followed:

1. School activity funds are to be used to finance activities not eligible for state funding.
2. Due to the special nature of the school and its residential status, major fundraising by individuals, clubs, and organizations is discouraged with the following exceptions: (1) class fundraisers for the purpose of offsetting prom costs, class gifts, etc., (2) school newspaper and yearbook for advertisement to offset production costs, and (3) performances in which admission is charged and used to support performing arts groups and student activities. **No fundraiser shall begin until written approval is received.** All student fundraising projects must be submitted to the MSMS sponsor of the organization. If approved by the MSMS sponsor, the sponsor will complete and submit an MSMS *Fundraiser Request* to the Director for Academic Affairs or Director for Student Affairs as appropriate. Final approval rests with the Executive Director. Request forms are available in the Office of Student Affairs and Office of Academic Affairs and should be submitted a minimum of two (2) weeks in advance of the proposed activity. All funds raised must be reported and receipted in compliance with state law and sound accounting practices. Fundraising projects must not conflict with the goals of the MSMS Wellness Policy.
3. Projects for raising school activity funds shall, in general, contribute to the educational experience of pupils, and shall not conflict with, but shall add to the instructional program activities.
4. The Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs maintains the school activity funds and receipts for all funds related thereto.
5. Procedure for turning in money:
  - a. All money collected must be turned in to the Executive Assistant in the Executive Director's Office within 1-2 business days according to proper procedures.
  - b. All money spent from the fundraisers must follow purchasing guidelines.
6. Fundraising projects shall be confined to selling a service, commodity, or performance.
7. Out-of-school fundraising activities or performances shall be properly supervised by full-time personnel and/or parents with prior permission from the Executive Director.



8. In-school activities shall not be scheduled during the school day to promote fundraising projects.
9. Once the fundraising project has been completed, the sponsor shall turn in to the Director a complete report on the activity.
10. Use of MSMS email should be limited to pre-approved fundraising activities.

#### **PARKING AND IDENTIFICATION CARDS**

All staff members shall obtain a parking decal at the MUW Police Department. The cost of the decal is determined and assessed by the campus police department annually. Parking policies for staff are communicated annually; changes in MUW parking policies will be provided as they occur.

#### **PURCHASING**

1. For any expenditure of state funds, a *Requisition Form* must be completed in full to include:
  - a. The name, address, and phone number of the vendor,
  - b. Description and quantity of items to be ordered,
  - c. The unit price of the items, and
  - d. The total price of the purchase (including shipping and handling costs and any educational discount).
2. The completed requisition must be submitted to the appropriate division director and approved prior to a purchase order being prepared.
3. Approved requisitions will be sent to the accounting department for a purchase order. Last minute ordering is discouraged. If the requisition is not approved, it will be returned to the employee.
4. Orders may not be placed and funds may not be obligated in any way before a purchase order has been issued by MUW Purchasing office.
5. Remember: MSMS pays by invoices only, not in cash.
6. A check cannot be issued prior to receiving the goods or services.

#### **IMPORTANT: No purchase will be authorized unless this process is followed.**

Staff members may not purchase items and then be reimbursed. Failure to comply may result in the staff member assuming financial responsibility for the purchase. Purchasing questions should be directed to the Office of the Executive Director.

#### **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT**

The use of state or federal funds for tuition reimbursement has been prohibited by opinion of the Attorney General of Mississippi.

#### **TRAVEL**

Employees requesting professional leave to attend a workshop or to accompany students on a field trip must complete a Field Trip Request Form or Travel Authorization Form. The completed form should be submitted to the appropriate director as far in advance as possible and approval received prior to making any travel arrangements.

**Only approved travel expenses will be reimbursed.** Forms for requesting travel are available at Q:\Employees (McConnell)\Travel. Expenditures for food, lodging, and mileage will be reimbursed after completing a travel voucher.

MSMS vehicles are available for travel and should be used when driving in most cases. In the rare instance that no school vehicle is available, a staff member may use his/her personal vehicle and get reimbursed at the approved state rate. In some instances, approval may be given to drive a personal vehicle with the employee receiving the modified reimbursement rate. Unless given prior approval, no reimbursement will be given for use of a personal vehicle. Food allowances will also be reimbursed at the state approved rate, with the amount varying depending upon destination (see the MUW website). State purchasing guidelines prohibit reimbursement for meals unless an overnight stay is involved. Conference fees, registration fees, etc. can be mailed in advance if they are submitted in a timely fashion.

Requests for reimbursement of expenses as approved on the Travel Authorization Form must be submitted within one calendar week after the employee returns from the trip. Failure to do so could result in personal assumption of expenses by the employee.

State law prohibits smoking in all school vehicles by all persons at all times. This ban includes all employees, students, and patrons attending school sponsored athletic events and meetings. Please remove all trash and personal belongings from the school vehicle upon returning to campus.

#### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

All staff members are expected to participate in professional development/school improvement activities scheduled throughout the year. Attendance rosters will be maintained by each department.

As part of professional development, individuals or small groups may identify specific professional activities desired or needed. Approval for these activities will be determined by the division director. Professional development is designed to be an on-going process that will enrich the professional lives of the faculty and staff at MSMS. Feedback on Staff development offerings is encouraged and will be used for future planning.

#### **OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

The Office of Advancement is charged with the responsibility of coordinating external affairs. If a member of the faculty or staff is asked to give a presentation to a civic or service group, and interview to the media, or engage in similar activities representing MSMS, the Director for School Advancement and/or Coordinator for Public Relations should be informed prior to the activity. **Names and/or photographs of students should not be given to outside sources unless approval for the release of their names or pictures has been cleared through the Director for School Advancement's office.**

There will be one official logo for the school to be used on all correspondence, advertisements, and public displays representing the school. This logo is to be used on brochures, posters, handouts, advertisements, stationery, envelopes, and various other printed items. The logo should not be given to any public entity outside of MSMS without the prior knowledge of the Director for School Advancement. The official logo of MSMS is the mortarboard

with the profiles of two faces and name of the school printed below. The mortarboard may be used without the name when appropriate. The theme line to be used in conjunction with the logo is “An opportunity for excellence”.

## **ASSEMBLIES**

Assembly programs shall be complementary to our school mission. Although large group sessions are appropriate for intellectual stimulation, they often are not effective situations for enhanced learning. In most cases, small group sessions, i.e. regular classes or seminars, and a credible adult teacher will produce the most effective learning situation.

To protect instructional time, assemblies will rarely be scheduled between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. All attempts will be made to schedule assemblies at 4:00 p.m.; however, when an assembly is scheduled for the entire student body or for large groups [i.e., grade levels], appropriate space will be reserved and employees and students will be notified in advance. Staff without specific responsibilities during the assembly time should accompany students unless advised otherwise. The role of the staff will be to (1) ensure that students take a direct route to the assembly, (2) model appropriate behavior for the program, and (3) encourage students to participate in interactive programs.

## **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

Being familiar with student expectations in all areas of life at MSMS will better enable employees to understand and interact with students. Faculty and staff are expected to become familiar with the policies contained in the Student Handbook and enforce these policies.

## **CALENDAR**

MSMS has two calendars, an Activities calendar and official school calendar. The official school calendar is posted on the MSMS website and can be imported from Microsoft Outlook. The calendar contains extended weekends, holidays, test dates, school academic events, and school athletic events. **Before planning an activity or event, a teacher/staff member must check with the appropriate director for approval. Once approval is given, the teacher/staff member will send an email to the Executive Assistant with all information regarding the event. The event will then be entered into the Activities Calendar.** All club/activity sponsors and all coaches must submit a schedule of events to avoid serious conflicts where possible. Sponsors of events which will require use of Hooper Auditorium, Hooper Lobby, Shackelford Auditorium, or MUW facilities are responsible for reserving the facility at the time the event/activity is placed on the electronic calendar.

## **FACILITY USAGE**

Any faculty or staff member who wishes to schedule the use of any MSMS facility for any activity other than an event scheduled on the master calendar must make the request in writing to the appropriate Director after clearing it with his/her supervisor. Escalating utility costs and other budgetary concerns will require careful evaluation of each request. The following requests will likely require a facility use charge or interdepartmental billing:

- Requests that require personnel to unlock/lock the building or provide other support Services,
- Requests that involve use of the copy machines or printers,
- Requests for days/times that the building would not normally be in use (weekends, nights, summer), or
- Requests to use the building for Outreach other than those scheduled through MSMS Office of Advancement.

Any faculty/staff member desiring to utilize MSMS facilities to provide instruction for an entity other than MSMS or one of its grants should begin early to ensure that the sponsoring entity includes a facility usage fee in planning for the workshop or class.

#### **EMPLOYEE CHILDREN**

To ensure a safe and productive working environment and an uninterrupted instructional environment, faculty and staff members should avoid bringing their children to the workplace during the academic day when possible. Children are welcome to accompany their faculty/staff parents to athletic matches or other special events but must be supervised at all times. At no time should faculty/staff children be unaccompanied in a classroom, lab or office or allowed access to an MSMS computer except under the constant and immediate supervision of his/her parent or guardian. Such visits should occur infrequently as a result of extenuating circumstances. It is understood that an employee may be called during the work day to pick up an ill or injured child from school or a caregiver. Under no circumstances should a faculty/staff member bring a sick child to work; administrators and colleagues will assist in providing class coverage until a substitute can be secured.

## **WORKPLACE PROFESSIONALISM AND REPRESENTATION**

### **ARREST**

Employees arrested for any reason must notify their supervisor within 24 hours. Supervisors will inform the Executive Director.

### **DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY**

#### **Policy**

This policy statement is intended to express the commitment of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning and the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science to maintaining a drug and alcohol-free workplace and school in conformity with state and federal laws as set forth in the Uniform Controlled Substances Law of the State of Mississippi, the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, and the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Amendment of 1989.

The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning and the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science acknowledge and support the laws of the State of Mississippi as set forth in Sections 41-29-101 through 41-29-185 of the Mississippi Code of 1972 (1988 Supp.) which prohibit the sale, distribution, manufacture, possession, or use of a controlled substance in this state. As a result of this law and of the policy that this institution be a drug-free workplace and school, staff, and faculty members are specifically prohibited from using, selling, distributing, or in any other way involving themselves with controlled substances except as permitted in the relevant legislation. In addition, staff and faculty members are prohibited from drinking or being under the influence of alcohol while on the job. For purposes of this policy, the term "staff and faculty members" shall specifically include all personnel employed in any capacity by the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science.

1. The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science will make available to all staff and faculty members a copy of this policy and will notify staff and faculty members that, as a condition of employment, they must abide by the requirements of this policy.
2. Staff and faculty members are reminded that confidential assistance with substance abuse problems is available through several centers for alcohol and drug education in the greater Columbus area.
3. Supervisors must confidentially refer for counseling any person under their supervision who appears to be having difficulty with substance abuse.
4. Any staff or faculty member who has been convicted of a criminal drug statute violation occurring in the workplace must notify his/her immediate supervisor no later than five (5) days after the conviction.
5. Upon notification of such a conviction, the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science will initiate appropriate personnel action (see "sanctions" below) within thirty (30) days of such notification.

6. Upon notification of such a conviction, the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science is required by law to notify the applicable funding agency(ies) within ten (10) days if the staff or faculty member is working in a position that is funded by federal monies.

#### **Health Risks Associated With Substance Abuse**

The substance abuser faces many health risks if abusive behaviors continue. Physical as well as psycho-social problems may be present as a result of the continued use of alcohol or drugs.

##### **Physical:**

- Possible heart muscle damage and increased risk of heart disease, leading to heart failure
- Liver destruction
- Severe digestive tract damage
- Damage to the reproductive system
- Possible birth defects if alcohol or drugs are used during pregnancy
- Physical dependence with abuse of certain substances
- Malnutrition
- Blood disorders
- Risk of AIDS or hepatitis if drugs are injected

##### **Psychological:**

- Mood swings
- Mental disorders
- Depression

##### **Social:**

- Personal tragedy
- Family violence
- Divorce
- Loss of friends
- Ruined career
- Legal problems
- Financial problems
- Accidents, e.g. motor vehicle accidents, drowning, poisoning, overdosing

#### **Drug and Alcohol Programs in the Community**

**COMMUNITY COUNSELING SERVICES** – (CCS) provides outpatient therapy for substance abusers and their families. In addition, CCS administers two residential treatment programs. 1001 Main Street, Columbus, Mississippi 39701, 328-9225.

**THE PINES** – A residential treatment program administered through CCS for male substance abusers. Inpatient care is provided for a minimum of six (6) weeks and is based on the individual's ability to pay. Self-referral may be made; however, other referrals may be through family members or the courts. 1001 Main Street, Columbus, MS 39701, 662.327.7916.

**CADY HILL** – A residential treatment program administered through CCS for female substance abusers. The type of care, cost, and the referral systems are the same as The Pines. 1001 Main Street, Columbus, Mississippi 39701, 327-0682.

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS** – Provides help and support to people who have problems with drug and alcohol abuse. AA also supports Al-Anon which is a program designed for the family of the abuser. AA meets on MUW campus at Building #63, Monday through Friday at 8:00 a.m., 12:15 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Phone number: 327-8914. A complete schedule of meetings may be found at <http://www.aa-mississippi.org/meetings/columbus.html>.

**RECOVERY HOUSE** – Provides substance abuse treatment for females and provides a comprehensive approach to rehabilitation, including an emergency shelter and transitional housing for women. Also provides information, intervention, assessment, outpatient treatment, referrals, family counseling, and employee assistance programs. P. O. BOX 2590, COLUMBUS, MS 39704, Phone: (662) 329-4333.

### **Sanctions**

- A. Depending upon the facts relating to any drug conviction or use, the employee may be: suspended pending further investigation; required to participate in a drug abuse assistance program; issued a written warning; terminated; or allowed to continue in a work status. For terminations, the applicable termination procedure will apply, based upon the status of the employee. Any action will be initiated within thirty (30) days after the facts become known by MSMS/MUW.
- B. If an employee employed on a federal contract or grant fails to notify his/her immediate supervisor of any criminal drug state conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace within five (5) working days after such a conviction, he/she will be suspended pending investigation with termination possible.
- C. If an employee is suspected of violating any criminal drug statute in the workplace, the MUW Department of Public Safety will be called to begin investigation of the case.
- D. If an employee is found to be drinking or under the influence of alcohol while on the job, that employee may be subject to disciplinary action which may include termination of employment.

### **TOBACCO USE**

MSMS is a smoke and tobacco-free environment. State law prohibits smoking in all public school facilities and in all school vehicles by all persons at all times. This ban includes all employees, students, and patrons attending school sponsored athletic events and meetings. According to MUW policy, use of tobacco and simulated tobacco in all forms (including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, hookahs, pipes, blunts, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping devices, and all other electronic smoking devices) is prohibited in all owned, operated, leased, occupied, and controlled entities of Mississippi University for Women (including but not limited to all buildings, grounds, parking areas, walkways, intramural fields, tennis courts, and any other recreational or public areas) and vehicles owned or leased by MUW, as well as any spaces where university-sponsored or university-related activities are held, including during non-instructional and non-service hours.

## **CAMPUS AND ACTIVITY CONDUCT**

Student conduct outside the classroom, on school-sponsored trips and during activities, is the concern and responsibility of **all employees**. Faculty and staff have the authority and are expected to correct or reprimand any student not conforming to the school's expectations for community conduct. Toward that end, they shall be expected to possess a working knowledge of student policies described in the Student Handbook.

Students, faculty, and staff should work cooperatively to ensure that proper conduct is both understood and demonstrated for the various functions attended by MSMS students. Staff shall inform students of proper behavior and policies prior to trips, concerts, lectures, etc. Faculty or staff shall report any policy or behavior infraction during the school day to the Director for Academic Affairs.

## **CELL PHONES**

All cell phones, for both students and faculty, are to be turned to the "vibrate" or off position during instructional time.

## **ONE-ON-ONE CONTACT BETWEEN STAFF MEMBERS AND STUDENTS**

### Definitions:

**Authorized Adult and/or Staff Member:** Individuals, paid or unpaid, who interact with, supervise, chaperone, or otherwise oversee students in school-related activities. This includes but is not limited to faculty, staff, volunteers, graduate and undergraduate students, interns, employees of temporary employment agencies, and independent contractors/consultants. The Authorized Adult's role may include positions as counselors, coaches, chaperones, instructors, residence life staff, etc. For purpose of this policy, the term "Staff Member" is also assigned this definition. This does not include temporary guest speakers, presenters and other individuals who have no direct contact with students other than short-term activities supervised by program staff.

**Student:** Any person enrolled at the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science.

**One-on-One Contact:** Unsupervised interaction between any authorized adult and a single student without at least one other authorized adult, parent or legal guardian present. One-on-One contact includes transportation of a student in a private vehicle by an Authorized Adult/Staff Member in the course and scope of performing official duties or as part of a program. One-on-one contact also includes electronic communication, such as social media, email and texting.

**Non-Public Area:** Places that are not common areas, cannot be observed from common areas, or which are not monitored by video surveillance equipment approved by the school. For purposes of this definition, a "common area" is an area where one would normally anticipate others are present but only during business hours or such times as one would reasonably anticipate others would be present.

### Policy:

No Authorized Adult or Staff Member shall have one-on-one contact with students in a non-public area.



In the case of electronic communications, Authorized Adults/Staff Members must not have any direct electronic communications with individual students without another Authorized Adult, parent, or legal guardian being included in the communication. Email communication utilizing only school email addresses is exempt from this requirement.

It is acceptable for an individual Staff Member to interact with an individual student as long as the interaction occurs in an open or public area (common area), or in non-public settings that are visible from common areas during normal business hours or such other times one would reasonably anticipate others would be present. This includes meetings in private offices during normal business hours where open doors or windows allow for a clear line of sight from the common areas.

**COLLEGIAL RELATIONS**

Since a very high correlation exists between collegial relationships and school success, professional relationships should be maintained at the highest standards. Any faculty or staff member who acts in an unprofessional manner will be considered for disciplinary action. Problems arising between faculty/staff members should be resolved quickly in a professional manner. Employees may use the following chart to rate their own contribution to school success – and think about how others would rate them based upon their behavior.

Do you. . . .			Or do you. . . .		
ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	SELDOM
←			→		
Look for strengths in your colleagues and verbalize them?			Look for and verbalize what you perceive as their weaknesses?		
Discuss concerns with a colleague face to face?			Send an e-mail to your colleague and CC: or BCC: to an administrator?		
Ask to sit in on a colleague’s class and invite the colleague to sit in on yours – followed by discussion of pedagogy and content?			Criticize the teaching style and/or content of a colleague’s course based upon what students say without data or first-hand knowledge?		
Compare the performance of your students with those taught by a colleague, identifying and sharing strategies and activities that lead to the highest level of student understanding and performance?			Assume that your degree, major, or educational preparation alone makes you a more or less effective teacher than your colleague?		
Refuse to enter into discussion of colleagues with students /parents and refer those who have concerns to a counselor or appropriate administrator?			Allow students or their parents to “bash” another teacher or administrator in your classroom, via e-mail or privately in your office?		
Make an effort to develop collegial relationships?			Make a concerted effort to be involved as little as possible?		
(a) adhere to your own schedule (b) sponsor activities out of commitment to students (c) report attendance accurately and promptly in all your classes/seminars (d) supervise your classroom at all times			Express concerns that a colleague is: (a) not working enough hours? (b) not sponsoring as many activities as you? (c) not reporting attendance? (d) not supervising his/her classroom?		

(e) let the office know when you must leave campus and when you return and try to minimize those occurrences	(e) leaving campus without telling anyone?
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**OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Outside employment is permissible provided:

1. It does not jeopardize the employee’s ability to carry out the responsibilities of his/her position,
2. The days/hours of the outside employment do not coincide with the hours/days of MSMS contractual employment [or personal leave is taken], and
3. The outside employment is consistent with the moral and ethical aspects of teaching or working with children.

**DRESS AND GROOMING**

School staff members serve as role models for students and as such shall dress and groom themselves in a manner appropriate to the educational environment. Research has shown that school climate impacts the learning process and that school climate is directly affected by the dress and demeanor of the adults who work with students. Therefore, discretion and common sense dictate that extremes in personal appearance and dress be avoided. Faculty and staff are expected to dress in a manner that is generally acceptable in a business or professional setting.

**EMPLOYEE LEAVE**

Attendance is not only important for students, but it is also extremely important for employees. Part of a student developing trust in employees is the level of consistency he/she observes in actions of employees as well as attendance. Students need to be able to depend on employees being available, whether in class, in offices, or in the residence halls. We strongly urge all employees to honor their commitment to students by maintaining a consistent attendance record.

However, we also recognize that issues will arise that necessitate employees needing to take time off. We value all employees and respect their need to take leave as appropriate. Listed below are the policies for faculty leave and non-faculty leave.

**Approval of Leave**

Personal leave is designed to take care of personal business, funerals, etc. A request to take personal leave must be made through PurelyHR as far in advance of the date(s) requested as possible. The appropriate director will approve or disapprove the request within one working day of the request. Medical leave is used only when an employee is ill.

Personal leave will not be approved for the day prior to or following a school holiday or the day prior to the beginning of the school term or the day prior to the last day of the school term.

When employees are absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the employee to complete their request in PurelyHR. If the absence is planned (i.e. personal leave, doctor's appointment, etc.) the request should be submitted in advance. During the period of absence, the employee will maintain communication with their Director.

**Illness in Immediate Family**

Major medical leave may be used for the illness or injury of a member of the employee's immediate family. 12-month staff must first use 8 hours of personal leave. An immediate family member is a spouse, parent, stepparent, sibling, child, step-child, grandchild, grandparent, son or daughter-in-law, mother or father-in-law, brother or sister-in-law

**Death in the Immediate Family**

All employees may use up to three days of earned Major Medical Leave in any calendar year due to a death in the immediate family. At the employee's option, the employee may choose to use personal leave instead.

**Unused Personal/Medical Leave**

Unused major medical leave is accumulated and carried over to the next school year. Upon termination from MSMS unused personal and major medical leave may be applied toward Mississippi retirement.

**FACULTY PERSONAL AND MAJOR MEDICAL LEAVE POLICIES**

**Full-Time Faculty**

**Personal Leave:** 16 hours per school year

**Major Medical Leave:**

<b>Continuous Service</b>	<b>Hours Accrued</b>
1 month to 3 years	12 hrs/mo August through May
37 months to 8 years	13 hrs/mo August through May
97 months to 15 years	14 hrs/mo August through May
over 15 years	15 hrs/mo August through May

**Part-Time Faculty**

To be eligible to receive leave benefits, the faculty employee must teach a minimum of three classes. Part-time faculty will receive prorated personal and major medical leave. For example, only a faculty member who teaches half-time and whose length of service is 1 month to 3 years will receive 8 hours of personal leave and 6 hours of major medical leave per month.

**Counselors**

Counselors will accrue personal leave at the same rate as full-time faculty and will accrue major medical leave from August through June.

**Sickness in the immediate family**

A faculty member, full or part-time, or counselor (employees who earn 2 days of personal leave per year) who must be absent to care for a member of their immediate family who is ill may use Major Medical Leave. For an extended period of family illness, the Coordinator of Academic Affairs must approve the maximum number of major medical leave days that may be used.

**NON-FACULTY PERSONAL AND MAJOR MEDICAL LEAVE POLICIES**

In all matters of leave, MSMS employees earn and accrue personal and major medical leave in the following manner: (More detailed information is available in the MUW Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, which is the source of this information. Where discrepancies occur, MSMS documents supersede the MUW policy manual.)

**Staff - Full-Time, Permanent**

All full-time, permanent staff shall receive leave as stipulated below for each month of service during the fiscal year.

**Personal Leave:**

<b>Continuous Service</b>	<b>Accrual Rate Monthly</b>
1 month to 3 years	12 hrs/mo
37 months to 8 years	14 hrs/mo
97 months to 15 years	16 hrs/mo
Over 15 years	18 hrs/mo

**Major Medical Leave:**

<b>Continuous Service</b>	<b>Accrual Rate Monthly</b>
1 month to 3 years	8 hrs/mo
37 months to 8 years	7 hrs/mo
97 months to 15 years	6 hrs/mo
Over 15 years	5 hrs/mo

There shall be no limit to the accrual of personal or major medical leave.

**Staff - Full-Time During School Year:**

**Personal Leave:** 16 hours per year

**Major Medical Leave:**

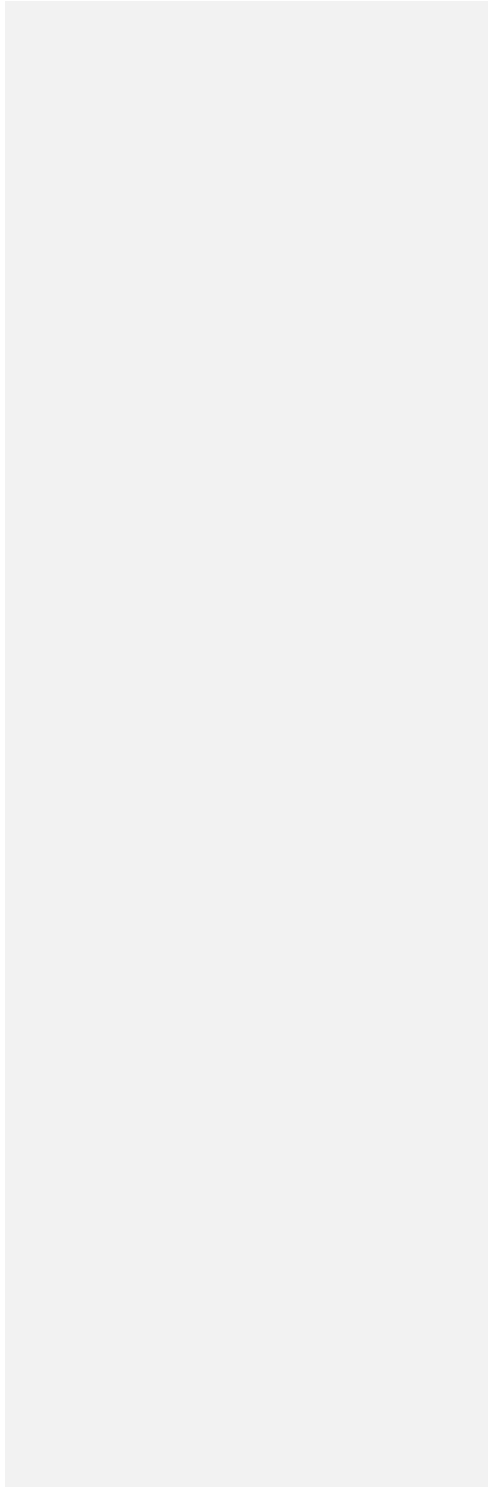
<b>Continuous Service</b>	<b>Accrual Rate Monthly</b>
1 month to 3 years	12 hrs/mo
37 months to 8 years	13 hrs/mo
97 months to 15 years	14 hrs/mo
Over 15 years	15 hrs/mo

**Staff - Part-Time**

Part-time employees earn personal leave and medical leave on a pro rata basis.

**Staff - Temporary**

Student workers and Resident Advisors are considered temporary employees and do not accrue leave.



## **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was enacted in February 1993 and became effective in August of 1993. FMLA entitles employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave each year for specified family and medical reasons. These reasons include:

1. The birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care.
2. The care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition.
3. The inability of the employee to work due to his/her own serious health condition.

Subject to certain conditions, employees or employers may choose to use or require the use of accrued paid leave (such as sick or vacation) to cover some or all of the otherwise unpaid FMLA leave.

Except for accrued or earned benefits, such as seniority, the employee must be restored to the same benefits upon return from FMLA leave as if the employee had continued to work the entire FMLA leave period.

Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee must be restored to his or her original job, or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions.

The employee is required to provide the employer with 30 days advance notice when the need for FMLA leave is "foreseeable." When such an advanced notice is not possible or the need for the leave cannot be foreseen, the employee must give the employer notice as soon as practical. Notice should be given to the employee's director or immediate supervisor and must be approved by the Executive Director.

## **EMPLOYEE LEAVE PAY AT RETIREMENT**

MSMS leave pay shall be consistent with paragraph (5) of the Mississippi Code 37-7-307 as stated below:

Upon retirement from employment, each licensed and non-licensed employee shall be paid for not more than thirty (30) days of unused accumulated leave earned while employed by the school district in which the employee is last employed. Such payment for licensed employees shall be made by the school district at a rate equal to the amount paid to substitute teachers and for non-licensed employees, the payment shall be made by the school district at a rate equal to the federal minimum wage. The payment shall be treated in the same manner for retirement purposes as a lump-sum payment for personal leave as provided in Section 25-11-103 (f). Any remaining lawfully credited unused leave, for which payment has been made, shall be certified to the Public Employees' Retirement System in the same manner and subject to the same limitations as otherwise provided by law for unused leave. No payment for unused accumulated leave may be made to either a licensed or non-licensed employee at termination or separation from service for any purpose other than for the purpose of retirement.

Pay for unused leave shall only be paid at retirement.

## **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION AND EVALUATIONS**

## **PERSONAL FOLDERS**

An individual folder for each employee will be kept on file in the Office of the Executive Director. These folders will contain administrative observation and evaluation reports, special works, and comments by parents, students, or staff members. The folders will be available for review by staff members on request. Staff members may ask that letters of commendation, etc. be placed in their personnel files.

## **USE AND MONITORING OF ELECTRONICS AND EQUIPMENT**

### **FIXED ASSETS**

All items with a value in excess of \$1,000 and items deemed “highly walkable” by the state auditor’s office are considered fixed assets and are strictly controlled by both district and state audit. These fixed asset items can be identified by the fixed asset tag bearing MSMS identification. Fixed assets are “fixed” by assignment to a location. The teacher or staff member assigned to that location is the responsible party for the fixed assets in that location.

Fixed assets may not be moved from one location to another without the completion of a notification card completed by the person/persons moving the equipment. No fixed assets are to be removed from the campus, even temporarily, without the completion of a hand receipt signed by the Coordinator for Technology and Fixed Assets Coordinator.

**A beginning and ending year fixed assets inventory will be given to all faculty and staff. This inventory will be signed by the employee and a copy given to the employee and the fixed assets coordinator. Any additions, deletions, donations, verifications of lost or stolen items, or transfers of fixed assets during the year must be reported by completing the appropriate forms provided in the back of the fixed assets manual.**

## VIDEO APPROVAL

While certain feature films/videos have educational value when used in the proper context, not all films are appropriate for use with all students. To attain the appropriate balance between allowing employees flexibility to use appropriate educational materials and protecting students from inappropriate materials, the following policy sets guidelines for the use of such materials. Films shown in classrooms are to be used only in the context of legitimate educational purposes, in accordance with the curriculum for the class in which it is shown. Employees shall comply fully with federal copyright law when showing videos in the classroom. All video productions shall be previewed by the employee prior to showing.

The following procedures shall guide the selection and use of videos in and outside the classroom of MSMS:

<b>"G" Rated Films/Videos</b>	May be used without parental permission
<b>"PG" Rated Films/Videos</b>	May be used without parental permission
<b>"PG-13" Rated Films/Video</b>	May be used without parental permission.

Employees are encouraged to discuss any content that may be objectionable with students prior to showing.

<b>"R" Rated Films/Videos</b>	May be used with written parental permission only.*
<b>"Non-Rated Films/Videos</b>	Non-rated films and videos require that the employee exercises his/her professional judgment in the use of such materials. If materials which might be questionable are contained, then it is the obligation of the teacher to obtain parental permission.

**Segments of Films/Video** Regardless of rating, employees must use their professional judgment before showing a segment of a film/video.

**Showing Films During Non-School Hours** All guidelines above apply to films/videos shown during non-school hours under the auspices of Academic Affairs.

Regardless of the ratings, employees must use their professional and prudent judgment in showing videos in their entirety or in part. Employees should properly inform students of the content of the film/video regardless of its rating, giving students the option of an alternative assignment if they choose not to view the film/video due to objectionable content.\* If a parental permission slip is needed to show the film/video, the parents and students should receive the permission slip at least five school days prior to the viewing. The parental notification/permission slip must contain a brief summary of the film/video, reasoning as to the given rating, and why the film is being shown.

The Director for Academic Affairs will monitor the policy implementation in the classroom and will have the final authority to make decisions as to the appropriateness of any film/video. The Director for Student Affairs will monitor implementation in the residence halls and will have the final authority to make decisions as to the appropriateness of any film/video.



## ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

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### EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Research has shown that the most effective schools share a set of characteristics, and that the most effective teachers in those schools display a set of traits or characteristics that are clearly recognizable. Effective schools research has shown that effective educators believe that 95-98% of all students can master the essential curriculum [with essential curriculum defined as that body of knowledge that all graduates are expected to achieve]. All teachers hired at MSMS are expected to have a proven record of success in the areas they teach; however, we will still provide timely and appropriate professional development to enhance teacher effectiveness.

The traits of an effective teacher can be summarized as follows:

#### Planning and preparation – The teacher. . .

- A. Identifies how each student learns best;
- B. Does careful planning and preparation for classes with special emphasis on the first day and the first week of a segment of instruction; and
- C. Exhibits high expectations for each student's achievement.

#### Classroom management – The teacher. . .

- A. Makes clear the rules, consequences, and procedures on the first day and adheres to those rules consistently throughout the school year;
- B. Provides for a high rate of correct answers by using learning activities that are neither too easy nor too difficult for students;
- C. Keeps students on academic tasks and promotes extensive content coverage;
- D. Remediates individual learning deficiencies with specific transferable skills;
- E. Provides a role model for students by a business-like approach to teaching and learning;
- F. Uses direct instruction with the whole class or small groups when teaching for basic skills mastery;
- G. Creates a supportive learning atmosphere by showing concern and respect for each student;
- H. Is positive and gives students a feeling that all can learn; and
- I. Is present in the classroom and is absent as little as possible, understanding that there is not any way to truly substitute for the assigned teacher.

#### Evaluation – The teacher. . .

- A. Monitors student performance during recitation or individual work sessions;
- B. Recognizes student accomplishment;
- C. Provides individual feedback to students when needed; and
- D. Follows up on student assignments by grading and returning assignments in a timely fashion.

## **FACULTY - FACULTY RELATIONSHIPS**

It is imperative that all MSMS faculty members work harmoniously and support each other. There is no place in the education profession for the teacher who ridicules, belittles, or in any way degrades a fellow teacher, staff member, or administrator to the students or to the public. Differences of opinion are to be handled professionally and through appropriate channels. It is expected that faculty will participate in decision-making and will demonstrate and model support for the policies and programs of the school.

## **FACULTY – STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS**

Suggestions for fostering good faculty-student relations include the following:

- Be considerate of the many personal and academic adjustments students are undergoing;
- Maintain a high degree of visibility, especially during the adjustment weeks;
- Consider the welfare and respect the rights of each student;
- Employ friendliness, patience, sympathy, courtesy, sincerity, and candor when dealing with a student's problems or attitudes;
- Grade and return all assignments promptly to students;
- Be impartial in all dealings with students; and
- Maintain professionalism at all times.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

All teachers should arrive at school by 7:45 a.m. Teachers who have first period classes are expected to be near the corridor by their classroom not later than 7:55 a.m. ready to supervise the arrival of students. All teachers, even those without a first period class, are expected to encourage students to come inside the classroom promptly in preparation for instruction to begin at 8:00 a.m. The workday ends at 4:00 p.m., with the exception of days set aside for faculty meetings or designated evening tutorials.

Faculty will notify the Office of Academic Affairs by signing out/in or e-mail when leaving/returning to the MSMS campus during the academic day with the exception of lunch time. This record will be kept in the office, allowing office personnel to locate staff members in case of an emergency. Requests to be off campus for non-school-related reasons should be kept to a minimum.

## **TEACHER ABSENCES**

When the necessity arises for a teacher to be absent on a school day, that teacher is responsible for contacting the Director for Academic Affairs or Administrative Assistant as soon as possible, **but not later than 7:30 a.m. on the day of the absence**. Coverage of classes and activities to be missed must be arranged either with a colleague(s) or an appropriate substitute from the approved list of substitutes. Each teacher shall have an appropriate "Substitute Folder" on file in the office with up-to-date information about each class. Each folder shall contain, at minimum (1) seating charts, if applicable, (2) the teacher's daily teaching schedule, and (3) general daily procedures. On or before the day of the absence, the teacher may insert specific lesson plans and curriculum instructions to be carried out by the substitute.

## **SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

A list of qualified teacher substitutes will be provided for the faculty. Each teacher is responsible for contacting his/her own substitute to ensure that all classes are covered. No class is to be dismissed because of the teacher's absence without approval by the Director for Academic Affairs. If a teacher encounters difficulty in securing a substitute, the office is to be notified immediately. It is preferred that substitute teachers have an undergraduate degree or comparable experience in the content area in which they are substituting. In order to be listed as a substitute, an MSMS application for employment must be on file in the Office of the Executive Director.

## **SUBSTITUTE TEACHER LESSON PLANS**

Faculty will have emergency lesson plans on file in the Office of Academic Affairs in the event of an unforeseen absence. The emergency lesson plans should be submitted in electronic format to the Office of Academic Affairs no later than two weeks after the opening of school. These emergency lesson plans may be updated from time to time as faculty members deem necessary.

## **ACTIVITY ATTENDANCE**

Extracurricular activities are an essential part of residential school programming. All employees are expected to share in the supervision of these activities. Attendance at extracurricular activities provides an avenue for building relationships and noting student successes.

Held on contractual days, the following activities should be attended by all personnel unless prior approval has been secured for personal or professional leave:

1. Parents' Day (Fall Semester)
2. Application Review Committee (Spring Semester)
3. New Student Orientation (Spring Semester)
4. Graduation (Spring Semester)

Participation in the following activities is encouraged:

1. Athletic events
2. Student performances
3. Prom
4. Senior celebrations
5. Move in days
6. Winter Formal

When faculty or staff members are absent for any reason, they should submit their leave request in PurelyHR. If the absence is planned (i.e., personal leave, doctor's appointment, etc.), the request should be submitted in advance.

## **EXTRA DUTY**

All teachers and administrators are classified as "exempt" employees by federal definition and are subject to the call of the Executive Director for special assignments at any time when the best interest of the school may be served.

Extracurricular and co-curricular activities are an essential part of the school program. Teachers and administrators are expected to share in the supervision of these activities.

## **FACULTY AND DEPARTMENTAL MEETINGS**

As part of the contractual agreements, all faculty and administrators are expected to attend announced faculty, departmental, and school committee meetings unless specifically excused in advance by the person in charge of the meeting. Unless otherwise notified, academic meetings will be held *Tuesday afternoons from 4:05 p.m. – 5:05 p.m.* The specific dates will be announced and placed on the calendar. Departmental meetings should be held during common planning times at least once per month, but faculty members are encouraged to meet as often as needed to find solutions to the issues facing the school and individual students.

Meetings may be scheduled on other days only if deemed necessary by the Director for Academic Affairs or the Executive Director. In all cases, every attempt will be made to provide advance notice. Teachers should not schedule any personal appointments during this time.

## STUDENT ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Faculty members should be readily accessible to students. Each faculty member is required to provide small group academic support during evening study hours once per week. The dates will be agreed upon by the teacher and Director for Academic Affairs and will be posted as well as provided to students during the first week of classes. In addition to academic support during evening study hours, faculty members are required to schedule ten office hours between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and the hours should be posted in the syllabus. Faculty members should adhere to their schedules for teaching, office hours, and study hours and provide appropriate notification of any unexpected or emergency variance to those schedules. Students on academic watch or probation may be required to attend academic support and one-on-one time during office hours with the teacher of the course in which the student is having difficulty; however, academic support time may not be used to replace academic watch or probation.

Faculty members should express an eagerness to provide assistance in order to encourage students to take advantage of these excellent opportunities. Students should never be assigned a mandatory activity that conflicts with scheduled academic support time without obtaining approval from the Director for Academic Affairs in writing and at least a week in advance so that it can be put on the weekly calendar. This is done to avoid conflicts.

## ABSENCES FOR STUDENTS

Attendance at all scheduled classes and seminars is mandatory. Absences will either be excused or unexcused. Excused absences will only be given for illness (confirmed by a note from the MUW Health Center), school sponsored activities, or required family activities for which prior approval has been given by the Director for Academic Affairs. All other absences will be unexcused. **Teachers should take roll and report absences either electronically or by sending an absence slip to the Office of Academic Affairs within the first ten (10) minutes of EACH class period. Consequences for unexcused absences are listed in the *MSMS Student Handbook*.**

## TARDINESS

Students are expected to be on time for all classes and **all** teachers are expected to document and report student tardiness. During the first week of each school year, students are allowed a period of adjustment to their schedules. Beginning with the sixth day of the semester, the consequences for tardiness to academic classes will be imposed. More than 30 minutes late to class constitutes an unexcused absence. Consequences for both unexcused absences and tardiness are listed in the *MSMS Student Handbook*.

## CLASSROOM SUPERVISION

The courts have ruled that teachers who are negligent in providing classroom supervision – regardless of reason – are still responsible for whatever happens in their classrooms. Absences from the classroom for purely personal comfort (except emergencies), personal business, or social interaction with other adults has not been considered sufficient reason for failure to maintain expected supervision. In the absence of the teacher, classrooms and labs should be locked.

## **DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS FROM CLASS**

MSMS does not ring bells to signify the end of class. Each teacher is responsible for monitoring the time and dismissing students verbally. Out of respect for their colleagues, teachers should not dismiss their students earlier than the scheduled time nor hold students beyond their assigned class period.

## **DISCIPLINE REPORTING**

The effectiveness of a discipline program in any school is primarily dependent on consistent expectations and application of policy. Teachers should inform students of their expectations for classroom behavior during the first week of classes. These may be in addition to regulations listed in the student handbook.

The basic premise of classroom discipline is that no individual student will be allowed to disrupt class to the detriment of his/her classmates. All teachers at MSMS are expected to create and maintain a level of discipline that is consistent in expectation and application of consequences and which will maximize student learning. If a student is continuously disruptive and the teacher finds it necessary to refer the student to an administrator, the teacher will:

- Send the student to the office with a written notice;
- Complete a discipline report form [available on the Shared Folder J Drive] and either hand deliver or send in a confidential manner by another student to the office as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the class period in which the offense occurred; and
- Review the returned copy of the completed form after action has been taken.

In an extreme situation, when a student is out of control or is behaving in a manner dangerous to him/herself or another student, the supervising teacher should:

- Send another student to request that an administrator or support personnel be directed for assistance;
- Inform the administrator/support personnel of the situation;
- Complete a discipline report form no later than the end of the class period in which the offense occurred [description matching that verbalized to the administrator/support personnel]; and
- Review the returned copy of the completed form after action has been taken.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Students suspected to have been cheating or plagiarizing shall be referred to the Director for Academic Affairs. Students found to have stolen and/or distributed a test, or found in unauthorized possession of a test, will be referred to the Director for Academic Affairs. Specific consequences are described in the *MSMS Student Handbook*. Parents will be notified when the incident is reported.

## RECEIPT BOOKS

Any time an employee receives money from a student that individual shall issue a written receipt. Receipt books are available in the main office for this purpose.

All money collected at MSMS is deposited daily. All money collected shall be receipted, counted, and turned in to the Office of the Executive Director each day along with a deposit form so that it may be prepared for bank deposit. Accounts for clubs or other groups can be established by the Office of the Executive Director.

## FIRST DAYS OF CLASS

Teachers should complete the following tasks:

1. At the beginning of each class period, record attendance in PowerSchool to ensure that each student is in the correct class.
2. Do not permit students to remain in class without a proper schedule assignment. Assist students in correcting simple errors in scheduling, e.g., wrong room number, etc. For unresolved problems, send the student to the counseling office.
3. Be sensitive and professional when talking with students about their assigned classes. Share any concerns [i.e., students who do not meet prerequisites, class size, etc.] with the Director for Academic Affairs – **not with students.**
4. Issue the appropriate textbooks, writing the student's name and school year in the text as it is issued. Keep an accounting of book numbers issued to each student.
5. If student enrollment exceeds the number of textbooks available, submit a requisition as soon as possible so that an order for additional books may be placed.

## LESSON PLANS

Planning is essential to both sound instruction and orderly operation of school. Teachers are expected to prepare lessons in advance of instruction. Assessments should be administered in multiple ways to determine objectives mastered.

## **SYLLABI**

Faculty members shall develop a syllabus for each course taught at MSMS. It is expected that these be followed through the duration of each course (semester or year). Comments or improvement suggestions should be written in the margins for later modification.

Copies of the course syllabus shall be distributed to students and the Director for Academic Affairs during the first week of the semester. Included shall be:

- Course Title and semester;
- Instructor Name;
- Office Room Number;
- Contact Information: telephone, campus address, email address;
- Course Objectives or Expected Outcomes;
- Statement regarding academic dishonesty;
- Description of assignments, number and type of tests;
- Due dates for major course requirements;
- Make up Policy; and
- Grade Computation Statement to include specific methods for determining grades.

In addition, each teacher shall present each student in each class with a written or electronic copy of classroom rules and expectations for behavior. These classroom rules should be clearly stated with consequences for violations also clearly stated. Specific classroom procedures should be clearly spelled out. Also, during the first week of school, each teacher will place a copy of the classroom rules/expectations in his/her substitute folder.

## **SCHEDULE CHANGE PROCEDURE**

Students will sign up for courses primarily based on freedom of choice and the recommendation of faculty and their academic counselors. The school hires teachers, plans facilities, and develops the master schedule around these choices. Schedule changes will not be considered to enable students to choose teachers or specific periods. All schedule changes are made through the academic counselors in the counseling office with the permission of the Director for Academic Affairs. Students are to follow their schedules until receiving written notification of changes.

On a space available basis, students wishing to add courses to their schedules will have one week at the beginning of each semester to do so. Going beyond one week causes students to begin class on a negative note.

Students will be allowed to drop courses from their schedules during the first four weeks of each semester without penalty if they are experiencing academic difficulty or at the recommendation of the course instructor. After four weeks, a "WF" or "WP" will be recorded on a student's permanent record if a course is dropped. Students will not be allowed to drop year-long courses at the beginning of second semester without penalty.

Exceptions to this may be taken if the school deems there are extenuating circumstances. Such decisions will be made after discussions with the student, teacher, counselor, parents, and the Director for Academic Affairs to determine what is in the best interest of the student.



## CLASSROOM CHECKLIST

Each classroom should be kept neat, colorful, interesting, and attractive. Serious mechanical needs should be properly reported. Old materials should be removed and discarded. A periodic “face lifting” of the classroom is encouraged as a class project. A checklist of questions might include:

1. Are the surroundings cheerful and attractive?
2. Does the appearance of the classroom stimulate the imagination and interest of students?
3. Are examples of quality student writings, drawings, or collections displayed attractively?
4. Does the classroom stimulate the education process with a variety of books and materials for learning – without being “junky” or overwhelming?
5. Are desktops kept clean and free of marks?
6. Is all trash in the wastebasket?
7. Are chalkboards/whiteboards clean?

## GRADING SCALE

The academic year will consist of four (4) grading periods. The following grading scale will be used at MSMS:

90 – 100	A
80 – 90	B
70 – 79	C
69 – Below NC	(No credit)

Nine-week grades consist of an average of homework, tests, daily assignments, projects, etc. Semester grades consist of the two nine-week averages counting 40% each and the semester exam, or its equivalent, counting 20%. The yearly average represents an average of the two semester grades.

## GRADE REPORTING

Teachers are expected to keep students informed of their progress consistently throughout each nine-week grading period. A good rule of thumb is to record at least one grade each week. Teachers are also expected to return assignments within one week after receiving them. All grades will be maintained in PowerSchool. If physical grade books are used, they are considered official documents and should be maintained accordingly. Grade books should be secured so that students cannot access them. Only persons on official school business should have access to grade books. The same security measures apply to using PowerTeacher. Students should never be allowed to access or view other students' information.

All assignments given for a nine-week grading period must be graded and included in the final grade. Grade reports, which will be recorded numerically, will be available for viewing through PowerSchool following the conclusion of each quarter or semester. Teachers are expected to get all grades recorded by the given deadline. Final grade reports will be printed and mailed to parents only if the parents submit a request.

## MAKE-UP WORK

Students with excused absences from class are allowed to make up any tests, homework, class work, projects, or labs missed. Students knowing in advance that they will miss class for an excused purpose are required to get their assignments in advance and are responsible for turning in missed work on the day of their return. Students in attendance on days tests or assignments are made are expected to submit the work or take the test on the assigned day.

Students should assume the responsibility of make-up work with their teachers. Students are to arrange for make-up work on the day of their return to class. If a student misses only one class period, he/she has three class periods to complete the make-up assignment. If a student misses two or more consecutive periods, make-up time is to be arranged with each individual teacher. Students cannot wait until the end of the grading period to complete make-up work.

In case of extended illness or absence, teachers are requested to be cooperative in providing make-up opportunities. Students should be extended every courtesy in receiving assignments and assistance, but the ultimate responsibility for completing make-up work, in a timely manner, rests with the students.

## STUDENT RECORDS

Student records are available in the counseling office for review by teachers. A signature sheet will be maintained to allow teachers access to the information found within the cumulative folder.

Per law, teachers may only review records on a need-to-know basis. It is vital that teachers respect the confidential nature of student records and the information be used only to assist students in achieving success at MSMS.

## TEXTBOOKS

### Assessment of fines

When use of a textbook has been completed, each student's book shall be carefully evaluated by the teacher. The teacher shall note, in the textbook record, the condition of the returned book. Fines should be charged to students for unnecessary damage to books according to the following schedule:

1. A book returned in such condition that it is unlikely to be reused will be classified as *unusable*:
  - a. If such book is NEW through one year old, the full purchase price will be charged;
  - b. If such book is two years old, 80% of the purchase price will be charged;
  - c. If such book is three years old, 60% of the purchase price will be charged;
  - d. If such book is more than three years old, 40% of the purchase price will be charged;
2. Books in the following condition will be classified as *unusable*:
  - a. Books that have been completely severed from their backs, or books that are connected to their backs only by the paper pasted in the inside of the covers; or
  - b. Books with pages completely removed; or
  - c. Books that have been marked on to the extent that the printing cannot be read.

3. For damaged textbooks, teachers will assess fines in multiples of 25 cents. For damaged textbooks, a charge for abuse to the book will be assessed, taking into fair consideration normal wear and tear.

**Lost books**

- New through one year: charge the full replacement cost;
- Two years old: charge 80% of the replacement cost;
- Three years old: Charge 60% of the replacement cost;
- More than three years old: charge 40% of the replacement costs.

NOTE: State law requires teachers to keep receipts for all money that is received from students for lost or damaged books. Receipt books are available in the office. Of course, all receipts should total the amount of money collected from students.

**SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION OF FACULTY**

The Director for Academic Affairs will be responsible for observing classroom instruction, evaluating performance, and recommending faculty members to the Executive Director for continued employment with the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science. All aspects of the evaluation process will be constructive in nature and are intended to improve the educational process.

Class observations will consist of frequent informal visits by the Director for Academic Affairs for less than a full class period or formal observations lasting up to the length of the class.

The evaluation process for faculty will be completed by the last working day of April. Formal observations, the evaluation folder, and administrative correspondence will be used in completing each teacher's annual evaluation. Faculty members are encouraged to visit the classrooms of their colleagues for the opportunity to gain new insight into their disciplines. These visits should be arranged between department members.

**FACULTY OFFICES**

Office space is provided for each faculty member to enhance professional job performance. Teachers shall post their schedules and office hours on office doors and in course syllabi for student use in seeking academic assistance or counseling.

#### **FACULTY OFFICE TECHNOLOGY**

All faculty members will be provided with an office computer for instructional and academic use. Internal communication is available using e-mail. Software is networked and available to faculty. Computer use should be considered a privilege; and all employees should pay particular attention to the *MSMS Acceptable Use Policy*, which governs the use of all school computers, the network, and e-mail sent/received via the MSMS network. To protect the security of the system, passwords should not be given to other instructors or to students. Faculty should check e-mail throughout each school day.

#### **FACULTY OFFICE TELEPHONES**

Faculty office phones are provided for faculty use in conducting school business. Please use office telephones and not the telephones of administrative staff. Students should never have access to faculty office phones.

#### **CUSTODIAL SERVICE**

Employees should have high and consistent performance expectations for the work service students who clean classrooms. Voice these expectations clearly and early on and give frequent positive reinforcement when expectations are met. If an emergency arises during the day [a spill, water leak, etc.], contact the academic office so the problem can be addressed promptly.

#### **MAINTENANCE NEEDS**

Maintenance needs should be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs. Major maintenance needs should be called to the attention of the Director for Academic Affairs.

## **STUDENT AFFAIRS**

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### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Office of Student Affairs supports the educational mission of the Mississippi School for Mathematics & Science (MSMS). The vision is to provide a high-quality student housing experience and to promote a co-curricular living-learning environment for our residents.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The Office of Student Affairs is concerned with all the aspects of campus living at MSMS. This concern is observed by providing an opportunity for group living, academic achievement, and social maturation in a democratic and diverse community. The degree to which a student benefits from campus living depends on the individual level of involvement in planning and implementing residential activities. This department supports the principle of initiative, which acknowledges that students must accept personal responsibility for their development.

The Office of Student Affairs staff is responsible for the development and implementation of programming that fosters an effective living and learning environment. The objective is to enhance the social, educational, cultural, and personal growth of each student. A positive climate in the residence halls should promote self-discipline, self-direction and participation in the community.

### **STUDENT AFFAIRS OBJECTIVES**

The division fosters the holistic development of the residents by:

- Providing a qualified and well-trained staff to meet the students' needs;
- Striving for a courteous, professional, and efficient customer service atmosphere;
- Maintaining attractive living spaces that meet the needs of today's students;
- Working to ensure safe and secure housing for every student;
- Offering students opportunities to nurture the development of strong leadership skills;
- Promoting a healthy social environment in a diverse community; and
- Creating a supportive atmosphere conducive to academic excellence.

## GENERAL

## PROFESSIONALISM

### STAFF ETHICS

Staff members shoulder considerable responsibility for the welfare of their residents. At the same time, they must maintain professionalism and a respectful communion within the organization. The following *ethical* considerations are important for competent performance with students and fellow staff members.

1. Remember that all staff members are part of the MSMS family and have a responsibility to the Division of Student Affairs, the residence halls, and fellow colleagues. The acceptance of this position implies a cohesive agreement with the goals and policies of the Residential Life program. Therefore, the actions of the residence staff member, both personally and professionally, should reflect the objectives of Residential Life.
2. Carry out to the fullest, the responsibilities of the accepted position. When needed staff members should make adjustments, contact and consult their supervisor, or ask to be relieved of their positions.
3. Keep the appropriate supervisor informed of situations, which are potentially harmful to an individual, the building, or the staff as a unit.
4. When an observation has been made that a student's behavior needs attention, staff members should identify themselves immediately and take the necessary action for the good of the student and the residence hall. Actions may include requesting help from appropriate sources.
5. When presenting information to residents, colleagues, or supervisors, staff members should make sure that both the content and professional mannerisms are exercised to the appropriate situation.
6. Use good judgment in social relationships with students and other staff members. It is against MSMS policy for any staff member to be involved in an amorous relationship with a student.
7. Discretion must be used with all confidential material and information from several sources. Some information from other staff members, students and MSMS officials must be kept confidential.
8. Recognize the difference between consultation and gossip. Discussion of a student's problem or a building situation with fellow staff members, as necessary, but not where it can be overheard by others. Exercise caution in discussing student problems with staff members from other buildings except for problems where mutual consultation and information is vital.
9. Disharmony among staff members, should it exist, is best kept within the staff. Suggestions and constructive criticisms within the staff are the most positive outlets.
10. Complaining is never appropriate. Seek out the person who can assist with the problem. Indiscriminate criticisms of the administration, staff members, or students damage morale and lessen the respect others have for the staff member who is criticizing others.
11. Encourage students to deal with their concerns in an appropriate manner. It is the staff member's responsibility to clarify, provide additional information, or re-direct the student.
12. If the staff member does not know the answer to a question or the rationale for a policy, investigate.
13. Remember that the first responsibility is to help students prosper from MSMS residential living experience.

## **DRESS, GROOMING, AND HYGIENE**

Dress, grooming, and hygiene standards are established to ensure the department projects a professional image to students, parents, and MSMS faculty and staff. These standards also make it easier to work as a staff if hygiene is not an issue on a day-to-day basis.

Employees should take the time to read the dress and grooming section in the student handbook. It is only reasonable that the same policies the students have to abide by be the policies our staff members follow as well. When staff members are on duty or anywhere on the first floor, they should be dressed according to the policy.

## **DISMISSAL/DISCIPLINE**

Failure to uphold and follow staff expectations and MSMS/MUW/local/state/federal regulations may result in probation, termination, or other forms of discipline, as deemed necessary by the Office of Student Affairs.

Actions that may lead to discipline or dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to comply with MSMS Policies
- Participation in events that jeopardize the safety or well-being of residents, staff, or facilities
- Possessing or consuming alcohol or illegal drugs on campus
- Being intoxicated while on duty
- Skipping rounds or failure to appear while on duty
- Failing to meet programming requirements
- Submitting late or incomplete paperwork
- Failing to enforce rules or regulations
- Misusing keys
- Misusing programming money
- Falsifying reports
- Engaging in other incidents or behaviors that undermine the respectability or credibility of MSMS.

Written warnings will be issued by direct supervisors for violations. After two (2) written warnings, supervisors will refer the employee to the Director for Student Affairs. If a staff member receives a third reprimand, he or she may be terminated.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION**

Staff members receive personal information about students and their families from students, parents, or administrators as needed. Please respect the privacy of the individuals involved and maintain strict confidentiality.

## **STAFF INCIDENTS**

Staff unity is important; yet, invariably during the year misunderstandings may arise among staff members. It is never helpful for residents to know about staff problems. Therefore, any disputes between or among staff members should not be communicated to students.

## **STAFF EVALUATION AND TRAINING**

### **EVALUATIONS**

All staff members are evaluated mid-semester and again at the end of each semester. All new employees are evaluated at the end of their first 90 days for the Human Resources Department. The hall directors in each building will evaluate the staff in their building. Hall directors and other Student Affairs staff members will be evaluated by the Director for Student Affairs.

Individual meetings are conducted as necessary and are held with the hall directors in each building to address individual areas of improvement and success. Weekly staff meetings are also held to address team performance issues.

Evaluations and reports from individual meetings are kept in each staff member's personnel file. These evaluations determine staff members' future with MSMS.

### **TRAINING**

Areas of training for the staff in Residence Life include but are not limited to:

- Supervision
- Documentation
- Leadership
- Professionalism
- Computer skills
- Business/Office etiquette
- Confrontation
- Safety & Security (Including Fire Safety)
- Counseling
- Bus School

Training is mandatory. Absence from training must be pre-approved with the DSA. This training will be conducted prior to the opening of the academic year. In-service sessions are held throughout the academic year.

### **PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS/EXPECTATIONS**

The following is a list of general performance characteristics and or expectations:

- **Ability to Work Without Supervision** - The extent to which the employee can work by himself/herself; requiring very little supervision and being self-sufficient in assuming the duties of the job.



- **Accuracy of Work** - The degree to which the employee makes mistakes or errors that require correction.
- **Adaptability** - The extent to which the employee can adapt to job or organization changes.
- **Appearance** - The professional appearance of the employee at work; cleanliness, grooming, neatness, and appropriateness of dress for the job.
- **Attendance** - Concerns whether the employee is at work each day.
- **Communication Ability** - The effectiveness with which the employee presents accurate information both verbally and in writing.
- **Cooperation** - The extent to which the employee cooperates with supervisors, associates, and those for whom work is performed.
- **Dependability** - The extent to which the employee can be relied upon to meet work schedules and fulfill job responsibilities and commitments.
- **Favorable Job Attitude** - The extent to which the employee displays interest and enthusiasm for his/her job and asks intelligent questions about the job.
- **Initiative** - The extent to which the employee works ahead based on his/her own judgment without waiting to be told.
- **Job Knowledge** - The extent to which the employee knows the details of the job and follows the job procedures to the letter.
- **Judgment** - The quality of the work-related decisions made by the employee.
- **Meeting Schedules** - The extent to which the employee efficiently completes his/her work and effectively meets deadlines.
- **Punctuality** - The extent to which the employee is prompt in reporting for work and assignments/appointment at the specified time.
- **Quality of Work** - The extent to which the employee neatly, thoroughly, and accurately completed jobs assignments.
- **Quantity of Work** - The extent to which the employee produces an amount of acceptable work in order to meet schedules over which he/she has control.
- **Relationships with Others** - The extent to which the employee establishes good relationships with the public (for example, being courteous and helpful with the public).
- **Safety** - The extent to which the employee follows established safety practices and corrects unsafe work practices on the job.
- **Use of Work Time** - How effectively and efficiently the employee uses his/her time to accomplish his/her job tasks (for example, does not wait until the last minute to work on important projects).
- **Willingness to Learn** - The extent to which the employee wants to learn about his/her job and asks intelligent questions about the job.

## SOCIAL HOST LAW

Mississippi Code Annotated § 97-5-49. Adult hosts of minors obtaining alcoholic beverages; definitions; offense

(1) As used in this section:

- (a) “**Adult**” means a person over the age of twenty-one (21) years.
- (b) “Alcoholic beverage” has the meaning as defined in Section 67-1-5.
- (c) “Beer” has the meaning as defined in Section 67-3-3.
- (d) “Light wine” means wine containing five percent (5%) or less of alcohol by weight.
- (e) “**Minor**” means a person under the age of twenty-one (21) years.
- (f) “**Party**” means a gathering or event at which a group of two (2) or more persons assembles for a social occasion or activity at a **private residence** or a **private** premises.
- (g) “**Private** premises” means **privately** owned land, including any appurtenances or improvements on the land.
- (h) “**Private residence**” means the place where a person actually lives or has his or her home.
- (i) “Wine” has the meaning as defined in Section 67-1-5.
- (j) “Light spirit product” means a beverage of an alcoholic content of not more than four percent (4%) by weight and containing one or more distilled spirits, as defined in Section 67-1-5.

(2) No **adult** who owns or leases a **private residence** or **private** premises shall knowingly allow a **party** to take place or continue at the **residence** or premises if a **minor** at the **party** obtains, possesses or consumes any alcoholic beverage, light wine, light spirit product or beer if the **adult** knows that the **minor** has obtained, possesses or is consuming alcoholic beverages, light wine, light spirit product or beer.

(3) This section shall not apply to legally protected religious activities or gatherings of family members or to any of the exemptions set forth in Section 67-3-54.

(4) Each incident in violation of subsection (2) of this section or any part of subsection (2) constitutes a separate offense.

(5) Any person who violates subsection (2) of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) or by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than six (6) months, or by both the fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court.

*Miss. Code Ann. § 97-5-49 (Rev. 2020).*

### **TAKING CLASSES**

Schedules must be approved prior to actual enrollment by the Director for Student Affairs or his/her designee. Resident Assistants are asked to avoid night classes when possible. RAs are expected to be on duty at night and on weekends. Numerous night and weekend classes will interfere with the RA schedule.

### **SHIFTS/DUTY**

Shifts vary depending on the position. A copy of the duty schedule is included at the end of this manual. The hall director for Administration will update the schedule each month. Each office will keep the monthly schedule posted.

### **SHIFT CHANGES**

Once finalized, a monthly duty schedule is forwarded to the Director for Student Affairs. It is important that the schedules remain updated and accurate; therefore, duty changes must be kept to a minimum. If you need to change shifts, you must complete a shift change form. Any changes to the schedule must be approved by the hall director.

### **STAFF VISITATION**

Because Residence Hall staff members live with minors, guidelines for staff visitation have been established. All staff members must sign a Staff Inter-Visitation Form before they will be allowed to have visitors in the buildings. Guidelines for visitation are detailed on the form, and a copy will be provided as a quick reference. Any staff member found having visitors without a signed visitation form on file will lose all visitation privileges.

## **SPECIFIC STAFF JOB RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **OPENING THE RESIDENCE HALL**

The summer is devoted to preparing for the start of school. Emissaries are the first to arrive to campus each new school year. They usually arrive the day before juniors move in. Emissaries are in training with the Admissions staff all day. Their car keys should be taken up when they check in unless otherwise stated by the Director for School Advancement. Once the emissaries return from training, the doors should be locked to each building. They are not allowed to sign out unless a parent comes to pick them up.

Juniors usually arrive the first Saturday in August. Each floor moves in at a certain time. Emissaries, faculty, and staff members are on hand to help speed up the process. Inside, the Residence Life staff is responsible for checking in the student, making sure all necessary paperwork is complete, and assisting with any maintenance or assignment issues. Room Condition reports should be completed prior to this day and then issued and discussed with each student during a wing/floor meeting.

Each residence hall should be clean from top to bottom. A professional cleaning crew comes during the summer months to clean the floors/carpets and bathrooms. The staff may need to wipe students' desks down to remove dust. All trash should be removed from the building. Door decorations and bulletin boards should be complete prior to this day as well.

Any junior with a car must turn the car keys in by the end of the first night. All keys should be labeled and locked in the cabinet. Juniors will receive their keys after they come off of junior plan.

### **OFFICE PROCEDURES**

Staff members are expected to conduct themselves professionally and maintain a pleasant attitude at all times. While working in the office, staff members should stay focused on each task at hand, and personal phone calls should be kept to a minimum, especially when students are present. Staff members are expected to be polite and civil even while dealing with difficult situations. This type of professional response will defuse tense situations and reinforce the positive behavior that expected of students.

Only MSMS staff should be in the office. When on office duty, staff members should arrive 5 to 10 minutes before the shift begins to get updates. Please be respectful of the time of the fellow employees by being on time.

### **OPENING THE OFFICE**

- Unlock the laundry room and computer lab before entering the office.
- Stop the transfer on the phone by pressing #2.
- Take out any trash. Make sure the office is neat in appearance.
- Get money box/boxes out of safe and count the money. If there is a discrepancy with the amount noted on the duty log from the night before, immediately contact the HD.
- Start a new duty log.

- Read the duty log from the night before to get updates necessary for the new day. There may be a student who was sick prior to the office closing and needs to be checked on.
- Prepare morning medications.
- Check the side doors for securing the alarm.
- Start the computer and turn on the program used for viewing the cameras on the computer.
- Open the office window.
- Turn all lobby lights on and make sure the front door is unlocked.

### **CLOSING THE OFFICE**

Closing the office is the responsibility of the HD on duty.

- Count all money in the money box/boxes. Place the box/boxes in the safe.
- Complete the duty log.
- Turn off all appliances in the office. Check to make sure nothing is on in the kitchen as well.
- Close the window.
- Forward the office phone to the appropriate staff member's room or cell phone by pressing \*2 and then dialing the phone number.
- Check to make sure the front and back doors are locked.
- Make sure the building is alarmed (this should have been done at room check).
- Make sure the office is clean and all trash has been removed from trash cans. Replace trash bags. (Ladies may leave the trash bag by the back door for the person who opens the next morning to avoid going outside in the dark)
- Be sure to turn off all lights and lock the office door.
- Lock the computer lab and laundry rooms before lights out.
- Perform lights out by turning off all hall lights and lobby lights.

### **WORKING WITH ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (MONDAY-FRIDAY)**

Academic Affairs depends on Residence Life in a big way! When students are missing class, the residence halls are the first to be called. When a call is received stating a student is missing class, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Make sure the student is not on a field trip or has not been given permission to miss class due to an illness.
2. Call for the student to page the office using the office intercom.
3. Give the student a few minutes to respond.
4. If the student does not respond, accompany another staff member to that student's room.
5. Once the student is located, he/she should be given strict instructions to get dressed immediately and proceed to the Office of Academic Affairs.
6. If the student is not located, call his/her cell phone (if the student has one).
7. If the student cannot be reached on a cell phone (or does not have one), call the Health Center to see if the student went there without alerting someone.
8. If the student is not at the Health Center, call the HD on duty immediately.

Often times the first phone call to locate a student is quickly followed with a phone call stating the student has been located. The staff member must still act upon the first phone call. The procedure for locating the missing student can stop only after receiving a call from the Office for Academic Affairs stating that the student has been found.

## **KEY POLICY**

The issuance of master or sub-master keys to MSMS Residence Life Staff members carries substantial responsibilities. The security and discretionary use of master keys rests fully with the staff member(s) to whom the key(s) is/are issued. Lost or stolen master or sub-master keys jeopardize the security of resident students. Moreover, improper use of these keys not only violates residents' right to privacy and security, but also undermines the basic trust needed for a healthy community. The following guidelines have been established regarding the use and secure possession of master and sub-master keys.

1. Professional staff members will sign a statement indicating receipt of all assigned keys and acceptance of responsibility for these keys.
2. At no time and under no circumstance may any staff member loan or give a master or sub-master key to any unauthorized individual. Authorization can only be granted by the Director for Student Affairs (DSA).
3. At no time and under no circumstances should a staff member leave a sub-master or master key anywhere but in the designated secure storage location.
4. Master and sub-master keys may only be used for lockouts, entering authorized public spaces (e.g., storages, computer lab, etc.) and entering student rooms in an emergency or for routine, announced inspections. Master and sub-master keys may never be used to enter a student's room in non-emergency situations, except where authorized the hall director, or the Director for Student Affairs.

Staff may never use a master or sub-master key to allow another student access to a suite room or bedroom in which they do not reside.

## **LOSS OR THEFT OF MASTER KEY**

Lost or stolen master or sub-master keys must be reported immediately to the staff member's supervisor. Hall Directors should immediately notify the Director for Student Affairs. Staff members will be held responsible for lost master or sub-master keys assigned to them.

## **DUPLICATION OF MASTER KEYS**

Staff members are strictly prohibited from duplicating any master or sub-master key.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

Loss or misuse of master or sub-master keys results in serious consequences and problems for Student Affairs. All staff members assume full responsibility for the use and security of master and sub-master keys in their possession and therefore must be held accountable.

1. In the event of improper use of a master or sub-master key by a staff member, the matter will be investigated by the staff member's supervisor and may result in either probation or termination. The results of any such investigation will be given to the DSA.
2. In the event of unauthorized duplication and possession of a master or sub-master key, the matter will be reported to DSA, who will investigate the incident. If it is proven that the staff member either duplicated a master or sub-master key, or possessed a master or sub-master key (or duplicate) without authorization, the staff member may face disciplinary charges, with the possible sanction of termination.
3. In the event that a staff member loses a master or sub-master key, or it is stolen from a staff member while in his/her possession, the matter will be reported to the DSA, who will investigate the incident. A final decision will be made by the DSA; if negligence or irresponsibility on the part of the staff member is proven, the staff member will be either placed on probation or terminated.

#### **RELATIONSHIP POLICY**

Staff members are expected to work closely with their students and develop a positive sense of community among the residents. Staff must be aware of the effect their personal relationships can have on residents and their fellow staff members. Becoming intimately involved with residents is against the law. Showing favoritism is frowned upon and will cause other staff members to question that staff member's ability to be fair and impartial in dealings with residents. Personal relationships that could be perceived as prejudicial or preferential must be avoided. Staff may become friendly with students; however, they must maintain a professional relationship with students first and foremost.

#### **ROOM INSPECTIONS**

Weekly room inspections must be done to ensure students are in compliance with the Department of Residence Life policies. The hall director should post signs informing residents of room inspections at least 24 hours in advance of the planned inspection, however unannounced inspections can take place as well. Weekly inspections are completed during room check (10:30 p.m.) Unannounced inspections may be done with or without the resident(s) being present. If the resident is not present, the inspection must be done with another staff member present.

Room inspections should be conducted as follows:

1. Retrieve a Room Inspection Form from the hall office to serve as a check-list.
2. Knock on the door, clearly identify yourself as a staff member and state the purpose of your visit.
3. Methodically check the room using the inspection form as a guide. Look behind beds, dressers and desks for fire/health safety hazards. Do not open desk or dresser drawers or disturb personal items unless a violation is evident.
4. Note problems or violations on the inspection form. Collect any prohibited items and bring them to the HD on duty. Be sure to label the items with the room number and which side of the room it was on. (If drugs or alcohol are found, do not touch them. Notify the hall director who will contact the Director for Student Affairs and Campus Police immediately.)
5. If a room does not pass inspection, inform the resident(s) they have 24 hours to correct the violation. If there was anything confiscated from the room leave a notation of what was taken. **Students will receive a discipline referral for room inspection failure.**
6. If the staff member has questions, he/she should see the hall director on duty.

Staff also ensures that residents have properly passed Thanksgiving, Spring, and Semester break room inspections.

#### **FOLLOW-UP TO ROOM INSPECTION VIOLATIONS**

Residents who do not pass Room Inspections are told at the time of inspection outlining the violations. Typically, residents fail for prohibited items in the residence halls (candles, extension cords, illegal appliances etc.), unsafe conditions (covering fire safety equipment, running wires through doors) or cleanliness issues. Cleanliness is the most subjective violation. Sometimes it is unquestionably a problem, but other times it could depend on the inspector. Staff members are expected to be reasonable and not become “drill sergeants” during inspections.

If violations are not confiscated or corrected at the time of initial inspection, the rooms are re-inspected after 24 hours to ensure compliance (prohibited items will be confiscated). Residents who do not pass inspection during a follow-up inspection will receive another disciplinary write-up and will be required to schedule a meeting with the HD on duty.

#### **STUDY HOURS**

During the hours of 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., students are expected to be studying. Whether that’s in the library, their room, or a designated study group area, supervision is very important! It is the staff members’ responsibility to ensure the halls are quiet. Privilege plans will permit some students to do other things during study hours. Please don’t let those students disturb students with required study hours.

During the first 9 weeks of school, all juniors are on Junior Plan and have required study hours Sunday through Thursday nights. Their room doors must be open at this time. Seniors may or may not have required studies according to their privilege plan. Students without required study hours should present their privilege plan card to the staff member to confirm. If they can’t produce the card, they must return to their room and begin studying. They will lose their privileges for the day.

All requests for extended study (late night pass) must be approved by the Hall Director on duty. Students must make requests by 11:00 p.m. but are encouraged to make requests directly following study hours. Also, everyone should encourage the students to use the time between 9:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. to complete work and/or studying. Students can have no more than 2 extensions per week. If students are found not using their time during the day wisely or being tardy excessively, they may be denied a request for a study extension.



## ROOM CHECK

Every student must be accounted for during room check. When doing room check, the staff member should take his/her master key. During room check, students are to stand in their door (unless sleep) until the entire wing has been checked. If a student is sleeping, the staff member must still check to see if the student is in the room. If a student is shown as signed out in the office but is actually in the hall, please make that change in the office. The student must be questioned about why they are not signed back in the building and proceed with disciplinary actions.

Any student not accounted for must be reported to the office. Always notify the HD on duty when a student is not accounted for or if they appear to be signed out but are in fact in the building. Also, never accept another student's word for the location of a student. Always check with the office.

It is important that room check starts at the designated time each night. Students are waiting to be checked so they may return to studying or preparing for bed. The HD on duty will designate the wings/floors each staff member will check. During room check, staff members should have their master keys with them.

## SIGNING STUDENTS IN/OUT

When signing in/out students on their Yellow or Blue cards:

- Make sure the student has permission to sign out to the location stated.
- Check the "Vehicle" and "General" permission forms to determine if said student can either transport or ride with another student, parent, staff, etc.
- Check privilege plan of the student signing out on their yellow card. The student should present their card before approval is given.
- Check the time when a student signs back in to be sure they are not out past the time they signed out for.
- Initial the card and document the time of departure and arrival.
- Document any phone calls received from a parent granting permission for a student to sign out. Be sure to write down the number the person is calling from. If there are suspicions about the person calling, contact the hall director on duty immediately and cross check the number with the student's file.
- Submit in writing, any changes made to a student's permission list.
- Learn the following places are off limits to students or have certain restrictions:
  - Area parks (Lake Lowndes, Propst Park, Lee Park, and East Bank) are off limits after dark.
  - No tattoo parlors (regardless of age).
  - No liquor stores, tobacco shops, clubs, bars, etc.
- Get clarification from another staff member if you are not sure about what/where the location is before signing the card.
- When a student is signing out overnight to any destination other than their own home, check their Overnight Visitor's List for the name and address. Any problems, call the hall director.
- If a student is signing out overnight Monday – Thursday, check for permission from Hooper first. If the parent calls, fax the permission to Hooper immediately.

Parental permission must be obtained for any locations/people not originally on the student's visitor forms. Faxes are the preferred form of permission, but if a phone call is necessary, check the caller ID! In most cases, if a phone call is the only way of getting the permission, call the parent from the office phone.

### **OUTSIDE VISITORS (someone other than a MSMS student or parent)**

If an outside visitor comes to the office to see or sign out an MSMS student, pull the student's "On/Off Campus Visitor Form" to see if the visitor has permission to visit the student and/or take the student off campus. If the visitor is not on the list, contact the parent(s) of the student and inform the visitor they have not received permission to visit and/or take the student off campus from the student's parent(s).

All visitors (parents included) upon entering the residence hall should immediately sign the "Guest Register". Also, parents will not be allowed to stay overnight in the residence hall. Please contact the DSA with any requests.

### **COMMUNICATION**

All communication with a parent via the telephone should be documented (whether they called office or the office called them). Use the parent contact form to document the call and write down the number on the Caller ID or the number called at the top of the form.

All long distance phone calls and/or faxes should be recorded in the Calls/Fax Log kept in each office. Personal phone calls/faxes, especially those that are long distance should not be made in the office.

Document all memos from Student Affairs, Academics, Admissions, etc. Be sure to keep staff (especially the HD on duty) updated with important information as it comes in. The staff members should also deliver messages intended for students in a timely manner by either paging the student to the office or placing their name on the message board in the lobby. If the staff member will not be there when the student arrives for the message, be sure to leave a detailed message with the next staff member for the student.

### **STUDENT INFORMATION**

At no time are you to give out personal information about a student unless it is given to an Administration staff member.

### **STUDENT ILLNESS**

If a student reports being sick and cannot attend classes, the student must go to the MUW Health Center (HC). Check the HC calendar to see if there will be a Nurse Practitioner at the clinic for the day. When sending a student to the HC, make sure the student has their MSMS ID. If the student is missing a class (or will miss a class), call the Hooper office and inform them that said student is missing class in order to go to the HC. Inform the student that they must bring all paperwork from the HC back to the hall office so that the information can be processed and prescriptions can be picked up if necessary. If the paperwork states the student may not return to class for the

remainder of the day, the student must report to their room and may have 45 minutes to eat in the cafeteria (breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner).

The student's parent must be contacted before a prescription can be filled. If the prescription is a controlled substance, it must be kept in the office medicine cabinet.

If no Nurse Practitioner is on duty that day, the parents should be called to see if they want a staff member to take the student off campus to see a local doctor.

### **PRESCRIPTION AND OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION**

A Medication record book is maintained in each office to ensure that students required to take medication are doing so as prescribed. All controlled prescription medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the hall office. An official list of what medicines must be kept in our office. If a student is found to have a medicine in his/her possession that should be in the office, the medicine should be collected immediately and disciplinary actions taken.

If a student requests an O-T-C (over the counter) medication, pull the student's "Resident Hall General Medication Use" form to see if the parent has given us permission to give that medicine to the student. Write down all medications given in the "Daily Log Sheet" with the time and amount of medication given.

## MEDICATIONS

- Document clearly each time you give a student medicine. Long and short term medicines are documented in the Medications binder. Document any given OTC medicines in the Duty Log.
- Count each pill and document on the appropriate form, as the student turns in prescription medication. Student and staff member must sign form verifying correctness on count.
- Count each pill and document on appropriate form, when giving the prescription medication to the student to take home. Student and staff member must sign form verifying correctness on count.
- Lock all prescription medication bottles in back office in separate space from OTC medication. Daily distribution of medication should be dispensed in a cup for each student. No prescription medication bottles will be left in the front office.
- Read the bottle and administer medicine as stated on the bottle. All changes to medications must be in writing from the doctor on his/her letterhead.
- Contact students who have not taken their medication as normal prior to the end of your shift should be made by the Hall directors and Assistant Hall Directors. It is our responsibility to make sure students who have long/short term medicines take them as directed.
- Monitor medicines and contact parents to let them know a refill is necessary at least five days prior to the student taking the last of the medicine should be made by the Hall Directors should.

Only the Hall Directors, Assistant Hall Directors, and Community Leaders will have a key to the medication cabinet. The only time the medication cabinet is to be unlocked is to retrieve medication to give to the student and then it should be promptly locked up again.

## INCIDENT REPORTS

Incident Reports are used by staff members and students to formally communicate a problem in the residence hall. While they are most commonly used to document a disciplinary situation, they are also used to communicate a student injury, damage/vandalism in the hall, etc. An incident report should be done each time the police is called to the residence hall. They may not be saved on the shared "J:" drive, but should be saved to the staff member's "H:" drive.

Remember the following when completing an Incident Report:

- Complete the required information when listing those who were involved or who were witnesses (i.e. name, building/room, etc.)
- Use roster and emergency card information if necessary.
- Investigate, ask questions and obtain as much information as possible before completing the Incident Report.
- Include only the facts surrounding the incident. Keep personal comments and conjecture to yourself.
- Write in the third person. Please type the document on the computer, however if you must hand write the report use only blue/black ink.
- Proof read!!! Make sure the report is understandable and accurate. Use Microsoft Word spell check if necessary.
- Inform students when the Incident Report will be submitted. Choose the appropriate time and manner to tell them. Avoid arguing about it.

- Be professional. Maintain appropriate confidentiality. Do not discuss the incident with people who do not need to know.
- Submit Incident Reports within 24 hours of the incident.

Treat all residents fairly and objectively. Doing so will help establish a relationship of trust and respect between you and the residents. Be aware that some language is potentially inflammatory and can actually make our jobs more difficult and our roles seem more adversarial.

If possible, follow up with the residents involved. Do not apologize for any actions in documenting their involvement (unless necessary), but do explain what happened and why the staff member responded. Tell the residents they will have the opportunity to explain their side of the story when they meet the HD on duty, or the Administrator on duty.

### **LOCKOUTS**

Staff may be called upon to perform lock-outs at any hour while they are on duty. Please ensure that you assist the student with the lock-out as efficiently as possible. Also, ensure that the lock-out has been noted so that the hall director on duty can follow-up with the student if necessary. A small fine is incurred for the first and second lockout. Each lockout after the second will increase by \$.50. The number of lockouts and the amount owed will still increase with each lockout.

### **MEDIA INQUIRIES**

Because their presence can be disruptive to the community, television and newspaper reporters should not be in the residence hall unless approved by the Director for Student Affairs. "No comment" may make us sound uncooperative or like we are trying to hide something. Actually, we want to be helpful and that's why the staff member should refer the media to the DSA. Simply say "Thank you for your interest in my opinion and/or perspective on this matter but let me refer you to the DSA." And always do it with a smile.

### **ROOMMATE/SUITEMATE AGREEMENTS**

The purpose of roommate agreements is to help facilitate communication and the setting of expectations between roommates. Making expectations clear, talking about concerns before they become problems, and being willing to compromise will help promote a successful roommate relationship. All entering junior residents are required to complete a roommate agreement form. While this document is not mandatory for senior residents, staff members should strongly encourage these residents to still spend time discussing and completing a roommate agreement form.

When conflict does arise, this document should be used as a basis for discussion to resolve problems. When providing mediation between roommates, the staff member should have a copy of the resident's roommate agreement form on hand. Modifications may be made to this document, as frequently as is necessary, but must be agreed upon by all roommates. One copy of the agreement should be placed prominently in the room and/or readily accessible by all residents in a room. Staff should maintain an up-to-date copy of the agreement form for each set of roommates in their area.

## **ROOM CHANGE PROCEDURES**

Sharing a room with someone who shares some common interests and characteristics is important. To this end, students complete a Student Profile Form prior to the start of the school year and those who attend spring New Student Orientation participate in Roommate Roundup. These activities assist the staff in determining a compatible roommate. The HD assigns rooms for entering juniors and will notify them of their tentative room and roommate during the summer. Because of limited space in rooms, students are advised to contact their roommate to avoid bringing duplicate items (e.g., refrigerators).

Once the school year begins, roommate changes occur only once each semester. The first opportunity to change roommates without going through our conflict resolution procedures is during the third week of the fall semester. Another opportunity will be provided at the beginning of the spring semester. At any other time, a student having concerns about a roommate, or wishing to change a roommate, must discuss the situation with the HD and follow specified conflict resolution procedures.

School officials may move a student temporarily or permanently due to documented medical conditions, or if it is deemed helpful to the student, roommate and/or living group. Students left alone at the end of the room change period will be assigned together so that everyone has a roommate. All final decisions regarding room assignments will be made by the DSA.

Toward the end of each school year, returning seniors will be allowed to request the room and roommate with whom they want to live the following year. The system of room assignment for seniors will be determined by the DSA.

## **ROOM ENTRY**

Staff may enter into student rooms under the following circumstances: (If possible, two staff members should be present.)

1. When a student or MSMS property is believed to be in immediate danger.
2. During Room Inspections.
3. To perform closing or check-out duties.
4. When the resident says it is ok.

A pass key is used for normal non-emergency situations such as maintenance and building code inspections and for cases involving the safety of the room occupants or students in the surrounding rooms. Staff may enter rooms unannounced when there is reasonable suspicion that residence hall rules are being broken. Where there is reasonable suspicion that violations of school policy or criminal law are occurring, a comprehensive room search including the use of Scent Detection Canines may be authorized by a school official. In cases involving an authorized search of the student's room, two adult witnesses should be present, and the student(s) will be present if possible. Student obstruction of a reasonable search by authorized personnel may result in disciplinary action. Each student assumes responsibility for activities occurring in his/her room. During school vacations, staff must enter rooms to check that windows are closed, lights are off, radios are unplugged, etc. in order to ensure the safety of the building during extended periods of time.

At no time will staff open a student's room door for anyone other than the resident of the room unless permission is given by the DSA or their designee.

**TIPS:** When entering a room under suspicion and the student(s) is present

- Be respectful. Imagine how you would want to be treated in this situation.
- Be firm and assertive, but not aggressive or threatening.
- Be observant. Note things such as how long it takes to answer door; what you hear.
- Use the Code of Ethics and the expectation that students "comply with Reasonable requests from a MSMS official", but do not bully or threaten them with it.
- Repeat yourself and the importance of the resident cooperating.
- Be patient. Encourage them to think about what they are doing. Give them time to respond. Silence may be awkward, but it can also be very powerful.
- Address the situation in the room rather than in the hallway, if at all possible.
- Deescalate the situation, if someone continues to refuse to cooperate. Do not create a spectacle in the hallway. Walk away and document what happened. If the situation does not diffuse, contact the HD on duty.
- Let the judicial process run its course. Don't take it personally.
- Don't focus too much on one outcome. Situations rarely work out perfectly. You are not out to "win" a confrontation but to address the issue at hand.
- Never argue with someone who is under the influence of alcohol. Hand the student over to the HD on duty and let the judicial process run its course.

#### **CLOSING THE RESIDENCE HALLS (EXTENDED WEEKENDS)**

At least one weekend out of each month, students are required to return to their homes. The academic day is usually cut short and the halls close at 3:00 p.m. Students must do the following before they are allowed to sign out:

- Rooms must be clean. (Follow room inspection guidelines posted on hall.)
- Remove all trash from their room/bathroom. No trash should be left in the hallways or lobbies.
- Floors should be clean (mopped or vacuumed).
- Everything should be unplugged (except for refrigerators). Everything including refrigerators should be unplugged during long holiday breaks (Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.).
- All lights should be off.

#### **CLOSING THE RESIDENCE HALLS (MAY)**

1. Check out each resident's room, making sure to check for all visible damages. Be sure the Room Condition Report (RCR) is completed for that student. Use the Maintenance Log to report maintenance issues for each room (and bathroom) and for each wing. Please make sure all water is running in the bathrooms and all lights are working.
2. Close all windows in each room. Indicate any windows that are damaged or where screens are missing.
3. Check that all furniture is in the room. If anything has been moved out to storage or another room, it is the responsibility of the student to return it to its original place.
4. Check that the room is clean and all trash is placed in the proper place. No trash should be left in the hall or in storage rooms.

5. Check to make sure there is a fire extinguisher on the hall.
6. Make sure the lobby on your floor is clean. Disconnect the TVs from wall.
7. Make sure all of the doors are open/unlocked, after all the students are gone. This will make your checkout easier.
8. Make sure the halls are clear of all trash, furniture, etc. Make note of damages in the hall on your Maintenance Log in the "Notes" section.
9. Make sure the end closet on your wing is unlocked.
10. Retrieve keys and IDs from all students. There is a form for lost keys and IDs. Only fill the form out if a student has lost their keys or ID. The staff member doesn't need to list all the students and then say yes or no for each section. JUNIORS WHO HAVE LOST THEIR IDs WILL BE CHARGED \$25 FOR A REPLACEMENT.
11. Turn in all hall keys (Room, Master, Front/Back Door, etc.), before leaving. Keys must only be turned in if the staff member plans to be gone from the hall for more than a week over the summer. (Arrangements can be made with the Student Affairs office to leave them and pick them up.
12. Turn in to the HD the Maintenance Log and the Lost Key/Id Form.

The staff member will not be cleared to leave until they have done all these things.

Proper checkout is very important. The rooms must be thoroughly cleaned. Make sure cleaning supplies are available and out in plain view so students can clean up their rooms. The staff member has the responsibility for checking out the students on that wing. If the student doesn't clean up their room, the staff member will be responsible for cleaning it up.

**Make sure 24 hours quiet hours are enforced. Don't let people cleaning up/moving out make too much noise. Be visible and proactive.** Walk the halls! There should not be more than 2 people in the office at any given time. HDs, be sure to spread the staff out throughout the hall.

When one roommate checks out before the other be sure to check mattresses, closets, desks, and dressers when checking the remaining roommate out. (Mattresses are swapped or junk/garbage is put in the missing roommate's desk, dresser, etc.). Lock the suite bathroom doors if that is possible. If not be sure to check the empty side before letting the last suitemate leave. It is a good idea to meet with both roommates the night before the first one checks out to see if there are any damage fines that need to be shared. The other one might not be around, or in an exam, when the first one leaves.

Pay attention to garbage/boxes on your hall this week. Know what belongs to whom and strongly encourage them to throw away stuff now instead of waiting until later. Make sure garbage doesn't pile up in lobbies/kitchens or Laundry/Computer room. It will become the staff member's responsibility to take it out if there is trash left in these areas.

DO NOT check people out the night before they leave. Both staff member and student must get up to check out to do a thorough job of checking someone out. EVERYTHING must be out of the room to check someone out. Once a student checks out they may not return to the building.

Don't forget to get their key & ID and note their return on the Room Condition form and Clearance Sheet. Write on the bottom of the Clearance Sheet any fines/fees they need to pay. Tell them to take both their sign out cards and the Clearance Sheet to the office and sign out.



Note all charges for damages in the section provided on the front of the Room Condition form in addition to the Clearance Sheet. The student will pay all fines at the office when they sign out.

MSMS charges for badly damaged towel racks and for damaged screens. MSMS doesn't charge for handi-tak-paint-removed spots unless they are unnecessarily large and deep or excessive in number. (Larger than a quarter or an excessive number of spots do require a charge. Excessive means More than five per person.) Make sure they get off all handi-tak!

### **BUILDING COMMUNITY**

Building a community is just as important as academics at an educational institution. This feeling of community and belonging helps diminish the number of students who withdraw from MSMS because they don't feel at home. MSMS wants the students to feel welcome. Most students who attend MSMS come because they want to be challenged academically and because they felt out of place in their home schools. How disappointing it would be if they came to MSMS and discovered they didn't fit in here either! Creating community and getting everyone involved on each floor – these two simple things make people feel at home and less likely to withdraw from MSMS. When the residents know each other well, they won't feel uncomfortable or isolated – and they won't be afraid to ask each other for help with difficult homework assignments. Residence Life staff should create a community on each floor that the Residence Life members and the students will become a part of that community. This well-developed community will make everyone's job much easier.

Many of the students come from isolated communities to find themselves living with people from different ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds for the first time. They may come to MSMS with preconceived ideas and prejudices and be surprised to find they have many things in common with people from other cultures and ethnicities. The more they interact and get to know each other, the sooner they will come to respect and tolerate their differences and commonalities.

### **THE SIX I'S OF COMMUNITY**

1. **Introduction** - students must be introduced to the physical setting, policies, and practices of their new environment. It is important that students be oriented to the norms, values and rules of the community.
2. **Interaction** - students need the opportunity for interaction with one another, so that they may be exposed to different people and experiences and learn from those differences.
3. **Involvement** - true communities encourage, *expect*, and reward member involvement. Students need to feel involved in their own community, so that their community is one that evolves into students naturally helping one another with personal and academic problems (also engaging in the maintenance of community standards).
4. **Influence** - communities are more successful when they allow members to have influence in with regard to their physical and social environments. While many rules are non-negotiable (i.e. study hours), there are ways that students can have collective control within their community -what social activities they wish to participate in/organize; how they want to manage recycling; wing duty, etc.
5. **Investment** - naturally flows from involvement and influence. When students have a high investment in their community, they care about one another and their group. Boundaries with respect to other groups are clear, and group or institutional property is guarded rather than damaged. People start taking responsibility for

themselves and the need for open, honest and assertive communication with one another, rather than expecting that the members of staff are the only ones responsible.

6. **Identity** - when students are able to relate to a floor identity, they tend to refer to themselves in collective terms, like we and us, rather than I and they. Emphasis begins to be put on common purposes and unity.

## TALKING TO THE COMMUNITY

Why is dialogue important among members of a community? To begin with, community is the place where people feel that they belong, fit in, are cared for, and a place where they feel important. In addition to being a place where people fit in, community ideally should be a place where it is acceptable to disagree or conflict. Lappe and DuBois cite the art of "Creative Conflict" or dialogue as a means of demonstrating diverse perspectives, uncovering interests in a group, and building group confidence. They advocate dialogue that creates an environment "safe" for difference. To create such an environment, it is necessary to ease the fears of community members surrounding dialogue and conflict. Such fears might include embarrassment, ignorance, and ridicule.

How to create an environment "safe" for difference:

- agree to leave labels at the door
- agree to disagree, then explore common ground
- keep focus on the present - and on solutions
- support restrained expressions of anger
- be prepared to speak your mind make no permanent enemies
- finally, remember that no community can deal effectively with an issue unless it is acknowledged

## COMMUNITY RITUALS

The idea of rituals is grounded in giving some form of identity or common purpose to the community. Rituals are staged, public, and stylized versions of how things should be and beliefs about how things are that eloquently describe and shape cultural patterns. Although the possibilities for expression are endless, similarly patterns are repeated over time and become part of, as well as reflect, a group's history. These patterns teach cooperation; the importance of tradition, social relations, and solidarity; tasks and goals of the group; and the place of authority. Rituals make statements about the quality of life within the community and set standards against which people are asked to compare and modify their behavior, values, activities, and relationships.

## COMMUNITY BUILDING – THE BEFORE AND AFTER

So, you think that community building starts after the students get here??? Think again. In order for the students to feel at home you'll need to do some behind the scenes work to begin making your area a welcoming place where people can begin to foster lasting connections. Community also involves the physical setting of the building - you know the things you do to make it "homey." Below are some suggestions for you to consider:

### Before the Students Arrive:

- Post the names of staff members in the building with a brief explanation of what each does and where they can be located. A picture of each staff member may help.
- Identify the facilities and equipment in the area with proper signage (lounges, study rooms, vending area, laundry room, computer room, etc.).
- Place names on doors of residents - first names or nicknames only. These are called door decs.
- Place a map in the common area for people to mark where they came from.
- Post MSMS/Residential Life information in common areas (phone numbers, contact people, services).
- Post a "Who to Call if" sheet on each wing/hall. Include police, fire, ambulance, the number of the front desk.
- Put a sign on your door that will tell where you are and who is on duty in the hall. Leave a pad for messages and notes.
- Post signs informing students of the first hall meeting.
- Make your living area a pleasant place by decorating with posters and creating a "homey" environment in the lounges.
- Complete all room stuffing and make sure that all pertinent information gets placed in each room.
- **GET SOME SLEEP!!!**

### When the Students Arrive:

- Meet residents as they arrive. Start to create connections and begin to establish "community" between you and them.
- Greet their parents. Help them at the front desk with their check in.
- Provide for interaction among section members; introduce people to one another as they move in.
- Invite residents into your room for a coke, popcorn, etc. Or just leave the door open when you're there.
- Plan activities (social, recreational, academic, and informational) for section and hall members that will enhance their getting to know one another.
- Model the "community" behavior you would like to see in residents - cooperation, sharing, assisting others, respect for others, etc.

### After the Students Arrive:

- Begin to work with other support staff.
- Begin to facilitate community contracts and develop mutual expectations.
- Facilitate a needs assessment to find out what programming events your section will support.
- Monitor the community and keep residents informed of any changes to the community contract. If the group is not abiding by the set regulations, bring them together again and facilitate a discussion to solve the problems.
- Use bulletin boards to advertise events and regulations. Keep all bulletin boards current and neat. Take down any outdated posters or advertisements.

- Set up a buddy system for students who share common interests.
- Check in with the residents that you have not seen in a while to make sure that they are adjusting to their new surroundings.
- Do not turn a blind eye to issues. Role model and promote positive behavior.
- Consult your supervisor for assistance whenever necessary.
- Be consistent.

#### ELEMENTS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH COMMUNITY

1. **Social Contact:** There must be a degree of physical proximity to allow people to have appropriate social contact with each other.
2. **Share Value and Common Purpose:** There must be an identifiable set of shared goals and values toward which the group commonly ascribes and which is seeking to fulfill.
3. **Primary Group:** The individual members must view the community as constituting their primary groups of acquaintances and friends.
4. **Power/Authority:** The members must recognize that the group has the power or authority to act in some way.
5. **Commitment to Cooperative Survival:** Members of the community must make a commitment to the community through a sense of energy output or self-sacrifice.
6. **Transcendence of Personal Calling:** Community member must recognize that the group is more important than any individual in it, and by virtue of this belief they must surrender some degree of individuality for the sake of the group.
7. **Communion:** This is the sense of member identification and acting out of a sense of self within the group.
8. **Process:** The group must have a sense of informal or formal process by which it operates. This may be a parliamentary type of meeting style, or it may be some much more informal style of interaction. However, a process must exist, at least in the minds of the members.
9. **Survival Need:** The community must be based on a sense of mutual dependence, and there must be some reason for this mutual dependence-- that is, a sense that survival can be achieved only through cooperation.
10. **Solidarity/Solitude:** Community members must be able to distinguish between the boundaries of the group. Solitude or some degree of isolation helps in defining the physical boundaries of the group.
11. **Faith/Abandonment:** In order for a community to survive at its most humanistic level, individual must enter the community with some degree of abandonment of their own personal desires in favor of those of the community.
12. **Time:** Community is dependent upon individuals having enough time to contribute to the community, to meet, interact, and to share common experience.
13. **Standards:** A community is supported when it has the authority to define the laws, standard, or rites by which it will operate. In other words, the community defines a standard of behavior.

*From The Resident Assistant by Gregory S. Blimling and Lawrence J. Miltenberger, 1981.*

## SEVENTEEN STEPS TO CREATING A COMMUNITY ON YOUR FLOOR

1. **The First Interaction.** Most likely, the first time you will meet our residents will be during the “moving in” phase. Residents’ parents, grandparents, and brothers and sisters may be present. First impressions are crucial with all those involved. **Be sensitive to their needs, recognizing that our floor’s community is far reaching. Greet them with a genuine smile and be as helpful as possible.**
2. **Check-In.** Keep your door open. Residents will be lonely and will wander in to talk. When you see a door open, pop your head in and talk to the residents. **It is crucial that you be available a lot those first few weeks. Hang out in the lounge.**
3. **Memorize Your Residents Names.** **At first it will be difficult to remember everyone’s name, but try by using word association or something relevant to you.** For example: Barbara is from your hometown. Steve has six sisters.
4. **First Floor Meeting.** Talk with your residents about what a community is and how you plan, with their help, to create one. **This is a perfect opportunity to utilize the Community Agreement.**
5. **Floor Goals.** Ask your residents what they want to accomplish for the next year. These goals can be long or short term. Have them individually write out goals and then discuss them. **Form a grand master list and post it on your bulletin board.**
6. **Maintenance.** Throughout the year keep the floor updated on goals you have reached. **Do this at your monthly floor meetings, on bulletin boards, flyers posted near elevators, or by word of mouth.**
7. **Unattainable Goals.** If you are nowhere near reaching a goal, have the floor help you outline a new plan. If everything has failed thus far, ask a resident to take responsibility of meeting the goal or figuring out why the goal is hopeless. **Maybe the residents know something you don’t!**
8. **Communication.** At the first floor meeting, or later in a program, discuss with residents what effective communication is and how they can use it with their roommates. **Use roommate conflict role-playing. Residents will often model your communication technique --communication is an ongoing process, and requires a lot of effort on your part.**
9. **Eyes & Ears.** Have your residents bring their Eyes and Ears to the first floor meeting and discuss the residence hall policies. It is important for them to understand what behavior will be accepted.
10. **Confrontation.** Throughout the semester, encourage residents to take responsibility for their floor by picking up garbage, keeping the lobbies clean, monitoring each other’s noise levels, and participating in floor and/or hall activities.
11. **Vent Frustrations.** Encourage residents to vent their frustrations. This can be done through a suggestion box, monthly floor meeting, or individually.
12. **Be Specific, Honest, and Caring.** If a resident is not cooperating with another resident or showing them due respect, tell him or her about it. **Give examples of specific behaviors.** Don’t say “I heard that you....” Instead, be specific, honest and caring and expect the same from them.
13. **Needs and Interests.** After the first few weeks you will gain a better understanding of floor and individual needs and interests. **Use this information for programming.**
14. **Programming.** Involve your residents in programming. Have them help you make signs or phone calls. **Maybe a resident can even preset a program in his or her expert field.**
15. **Resident Recognition.** When a resident has done something outstanding (made the basketball team, won a scholarship, etc.), put a “congratulation” sign on his/her door. You can make birthday signs as well.
16. **MSMS Activities.** Keep community members aware of service and activities by posting the information and through word of mouth. Proper timing is important. **Putting up a sign and hour before the performance is worthless.**

17. **Resident Who?** Those residents who are never around and have never attended a program must be targeted. Make an effort to personally invite them to a program. **Ask them to go to dinner with you and a couple of residents.**

## **THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A STRONG COMMUNITY**

### **Foundation**

**Respect:** Showing respect to yourself, the needs of others and property. Respect to those of different backgrounds, cultures, race, religion, living space, etc.

**Responsibility:** Community members are responsible for their actions, words and behavior. Community members are also responsible for their living environment, their community surroundings and the building they live in. The residence life team will be responsible for the above statements as well as providing a safe, fun, learning environment.

**Servant Leadership:** A community based on serving each other and oneself. A community that goes the extra mile, that volunteers in community service, that will keep their hall clean, that participates in organizations, programs, activities etc.

### **The Core**

**Attitude:** Communities that promote attitudes that are proactive are willing to change, form good habits, etc. Becoming a community member who tries to be the best they can be.

**Integrity:** Integrity goes beyond honesty. Honesty means conforming our words to reality, and integrity means conforming reality to our words. Personal integrity builds trust and you treat everyone by the same principles (you are loyal to those not present).

### **Pinnacle**

**Character:** Community members will enhance their character by getting involved in quality programs and services that promote personal growth, foster the understanding of human diversity, and encourage academic success.

## **PROGRAMMING**

Programming is an essential part of the residence hall experience. Hall programming is a great way to develop a community, educate residents while involving them in the process, and allow everyone an outlet to release emotions.

Programming is simply an organized method to help the staff member bring residents together for a variety of reasons, but most importantly, it is used to help turn a group of strangers into a community. Look at a program as an event that brings residents together for a common purpose...the event can be limited to one floor alone, can involve multiple floors – or both buildings. Programs can be social in focus, but can also be a method for teaching valuable life skills...but educational programs can have a social aspect also. Programs can spark student interest in new hobbies, recreational activities or potential careers. Programs can impart valuable information on developing healthy lifestyle habits. Programming is what each staff member makes of it.

## CONCEPTS/PRINCIPLES

- The program model is designed to assist the residence halls in promoting inclusiveness, student activism, and to develop awareness, advocate, teach/model, and hold community members accountable for the values of respect, responsibility, servant leadership, attitude, and integrity. It is through the community actions and values that will exemplify positive character development.
- The Residence Life staff will undergo training/in-service sessions geared towards these five core values. The purpose of training is to discuss the importance of approaching student leadership development as a values-based process rather than a skills-based one. The Department of Residence Life will use an assessment tool at the end of training to measure the extent to which we accomplished our objectives. The tool is designed to measure both skill development and value development.

## PROGRAMS

- Professional staff must complete 6 mandatory programs in addition to a monthly celebration with the RA on their floor. The celebration should be for birthdays, grades, student successes, etc.
- RA's must complete 4 programs a year (two each semester).
- Evaluations from all programs should be given to the HD (for a report).
- Programs can be done during the 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. and the 9:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. time frames during the week and any time on the weekends (be reasonable).
- All staff must assist with Winter Formal, Residence Hall Appreciation Week, Prom and Tacky Tiki.

## THE WELLNESS MODEL

In Student Affairs, there are numerous models used for developing residence hall programs. One of the most common models is the wellness model and this is the model used at MSMS. Wellness is a lifestyle of healthy living that focuses on balance in all areas of life. We hope to promote healthy habits in our students during their two years at MSMS. Hopefully, they'll take their wellness habits with them to college and beyond. Wellness is the state of optimal well-being, not simply the absence of illness, but an improved quality of life resulting from enhanced physical, mental, and spiritual health.

### Six Fundamentals of Wellness:

- **Self-responsibility** - it is up to you to take care of your wellness.
- **Holistic** - based on the integration of body, mind, and spirit.
- **Journey** - there is no absolute level of wellness, it is a continuing journey.
- **Balance** - you need to attend to all areas of your wellness to create a balance.
- **Uniqueness** - there are as many different roads to wellness, as there are people.
- **Time** - do not wait for a better day, make today a better day.

## DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

Wellness incorporates a variety of issues. To better understand these issues, they have been broken down to represent the dimensions of wellness.

- **Physical Wellness:** involves taking care of our bodies - eating right, exercising, routine medical exams. It also discourages against the use of tobacco, drugs, and excessive alcohol consumption.
- **Social Wellness:** addresses interpersonal relationships and helps us enter into successful and fulfilling relationships with our family, friends, significant others, pets and others.
- **Spiritual Wellness:** involves finding meaning and purpose in life. This can give us strength to cope with despair and help us feel good about being alive. Spiritual wellness may or may not include religion.
- **Emotional Wellness:** addresses intrapersonal relationships. It involves a better understanding of our feelings and emotions.
- **Intellectual Wellness:** involves maintaining cognitive stimulation to prevent mental stagnation. It is a lifelong process of mental challenges and creativity.
- **Vocational Wellness:** addresses career goals and paths and finding a balance between life at home and life at work.
- **Global Wellness:** includes the connection between personal wellness and the broader world in which we live. It addresses intercultural awareness, environmental issues, **diversity**, and global unity.

## PROGRAMMING IDEAS BASED ON THE WELLNESS MODEL

### Some Social Programming Ideas

- Monthly Birthday Party – Mandatory
- Celebrate a high GPA for your floor
- Make homemade ice cream
- Serve chips, salsa and watch a classic movie
- Discuss basic social etiquette
- Act out ways to improve interpersonal communication skills
- Super Bowl Watch party
- Trip to a local roller rink
- Miniature Golf

### Physical Program Ideas

- Teach exercises to your residents that promote good stress management
- Discuss nutritional awareness
- Take a group hike on one of the many hiking trails in town
- Do a basic yoga workout with a live instructor or use a videotape
- Make nonfat fruit smoothies and discussing healthy eating
- Take a basic first aid/CPR class as a group
- Discuss personal hygiene and have free products to hand out
- Discuss alcohol and drug abuse
- Start a physical fitness program on your floor
- Discuss body imaging



**Spiritual Program Ideas**

- Watch a movie with a moral dilemma and discuss it afterwards
- Have a basic meditation with music

**Emotional Program Ideas**

- Personal stress analysis
- A discussion about relationships
- Interpersonal skills
- The importance of humor and laughter
- Strategies for facing a stressful/challenging experience
- Coping with the loss of a loved one or close friend

**Intellectual Program Ideas**

- Poetry Readings
- Political Discussions
- Test taking tips
- Study skills
- Floor quiz show
- Word Searches (*Reader's Digest* publishes one each month)
- Taboo (great group game that painlessly helps personal vocabulary)
- Mind Trap (brain teaser game)
- Trivial Pursuit
- Floor chess tournament

**Vocational Program Ideas**

- How to write a resume'
- Effectively hunting for a summer job
- College interviews
- The college application process
- College essay tips
- Personal Strength Assessments (The Myers-Briggs is commonly used)

**Global Program Ideas**

- Speaker on Recycling Program or Visit one
- Field trip to a water treatment facility
- Adopt a highway program
- Bird watching
- Multi-Cultural food fiesta or talent showcase

## EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING

**Plan, plan, plan!** - Program early and often so your residents will come to expect floor programs as a normal, regular way of life at MSMS – not a last minute splash of programs near the end of an evaluation period to meet a quota.

**Expect some disappointments** – Don't expect a big turnout the night before a big Physics test or writing lab deadline – it is a fact of life at MSMS. Stay informed through paying attention to student chatter – your residents will know you care about what is going on with them and it will help you figure out a good time to schedule programs on your floor. Turn out for your programs will be better if you **poll your residents** to find out what weeknight is good for them. Even if residents say they don't want programs, do them anyway. How can they say they don't want programs if they've never really experienced them?

**There are two ways to approach programming:**

- **Spontaneous** – Very creative, but can fail easily.
- **Organized** – The most successful! A number of large and flashy social programs with witty titles do not always mean effective programming – even though they will go a long way in building community on your floor. **Programming should include a wide variety of programs** that open students up to the world around them as well as the positive choices they can make for themselves – all the while having fun together.

**Consider the transitions students make coming from home to live at MSMS:**

- Most of our students are 15 to 16 years old when they arrive. Many get homesick and some have difficulty dealing with the restrictions here because they had more freedom at home. Other students cannot deal with their newfound freedom because their home environment was much more restrictive and their parents managed their time.
- Time management is a paramount concern for most of our students.
- Active students who were physically fit at home will suddenly find themselves inactive and taking on the "Freshman Fifteen" during their junior year of high school. Many will start to live on a steady diet of Ramen noodles and/or pizza, leaving out other healthy foods.
- Other students who live in front of the computer will need to be coaxed into physical activity.
- Students will find their personal faith and values being challenged for the first time – some will tolerate these new ideologies, some will dismiss them, while others will totally embrace the new ideologies while sometimes trying to totally reject the values they brought from home. While all these issues are hitting them, students are being hit with much higher expectations for their academic work. This is a major stressor for students.

**Use your campus and community resources!** The career center at MUW, the local health department, even the faculty at MSMS can all be a resource for your programs! Take inventory of your resources as you plan for each program.

**All of the above stressors can contribute to a decline in physical and/or emotional health.** Our students eat a lot of junk food instead of regular meals. Some of our students have binged and purged or know someone who has. Many have tried alcohol, many have not; some can't wait for the weekend to get out of here to get drunk or high, see their significant other – even to see Mom and Dad. Some are sexually promiscuous, in sexual relationships while others are virgins. Some of our students will experience their first real romance at MSMS and throw caution to the wind...all of the above reflect a need for Wellness Programming.

## THE REQUIREMENTS

- The professional staff members for each floor will supervise programming. They are required to plan, implement, and evaluate each program and present written description of programs and results to the hall director. The hall director or HD designee is required to collect and compile programs and results. This collection will be available for others to view for ideas on programs.
- Residential Life staff are required to aid with major programs (to be decided by the hall director). Everyone will be required to work in some capacity with the execution of the beginning of the year Field Day, Winter Formal, Residence Hall Appreciation week, Prom and Tacky Tiki during the spring semester.
- Each floor will have a professional staff member and one RA. This will constitute a floor team responsible for programs for their assigned floor. The professional staff member will work with the RA to develop and execute each program. All programs should be presented in writing to the HD or HD designee before/after.
- Additional programs are highly encouraged for all staff, but not required as long as the required criteria have been met.
- **ALL** staff members (including RA's) are required to provide wing socials for your perspective floors - one will occur at the beginning of school, one at Christmas break, and one before final exams in May.
- Any publicity that is done for your programs need to be up at least 5 days before your program. Since we are dealing with high school students who have a lot going on, it may not be wise to put advertisements up 2 weeks prior to the program so it will not slip their minds.
- **Attendance & Evaluation:** It is **required** for all programs that you provide all participants the opportunity to evaluate the program. This can be done on the attendance sheet, which must be given to the HD or HD designee after programs for evaluation.
- **Forms:** If you desire to choose a location other than the residence halls on campus (i.e. Hogarth Student Center), the Asst. HD for programming will need to reserve the building with the MUW campus.
- **Program Times:** Normal programming for the residents should not occur during study hours (7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.). They may not take place prior to the end of the academic day. On weekends, the times may vary.
- **Community Leader Joint Programming:** Only one (1) program per semester may be done with another CL. Make sure that both staff members assume equal responsibility in terms of planning the program. Both staff members will receive credit for the program if a joint effort was performed. But remember, you must complete the requirements listed above within the semester. Also, you are more than welcome to do programs that will include both genders (male and female MSMS students).
- **Community Service Project:** It is suggested that everyone think about a community service project(s) to complete. Make sure it is one that will be of interest to the residents. You may want to poll the students to get an idea. This project may be tied in with the wellness model, especially for the environmental dimension. It would be nice to see MSMS visible in the local communities.
- **Program Proposal Form:** All programs will need to be approved first. This is to ensure that the program of your choice is deemed appropriate for the residents. Ask the Assistant Hall Director for Community & Leadership Development for forms. You must submit your proposal at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of your program. After approval this form must be submitted to the Department of Student Affairs to receive funding.
- **Budgeting for Programs:** A lot of programs can be done for little or no expense and some of the most creative programs cost the least amount of money! Any program that permits people to positively interact is always worthwhile. Also, remember salsa and chips are cheaper than pizza and cake! And it doesn't hurt to

learn to cook. Homemade birthday cakes cost \$5.00 to \$10.00 to bake while ready-made cakes can be very expensive.

- **Programming Meetings:** Meetings will be called as necessary to discuss programming. The Assistant Hall Director for Community & Leadership Development will notify you of such meetings.
- **Calendar of Program Dates:** It is suggested that staff sit down and figure out when/who will present programs within each month. The programs should be spaced out as to not have 3 intellectual programs in one month. If conflicting dates and/or times occur the Assistant Hall Director for Community and Leadership Development will ask that a new date and/or time be selected.

## **PASSIVE PROGRAMMING**

**Bulletin Boards** - This is an opportunity to educate your wing/floor about important issues in our society, health and wellness, positive community relations, academic success, resources around campus, resident recognition, fun hobbies, etc.

The two bulletin boards in the lobby will be for important school information/updates and events/programs. All staff members should help with the upkeep of these bulletin boards.

Wing/floor bulletin boards should be updated twice a semester. There should always be a welcome board at the beginning of each semester. The boards should be changed mid-semester.

**Door Decs** – This is an opportunity to welcome community members to the hall, to get to know their neighbors, and to begin your year of resident outreach/connections. It is also a very important way for all staff and faculty at MSMS to identify students' rooms in times of emergencies.

Door Decs should be changed at the beginning of each semester. All staff members are encouraged to change door decs a few times each semester, but it is not required.

**Design a Theme for your Floor/Wing** - This can really make things click on your floor and can be used to create door decs and bulletin boards. You can use this theme to start off your programming for the semester. Using a theme can make planning easier for you and can help create a sense of community from the very beginning.

## **Online Resources**

<http://www.residentassistant.com/index.html>

<http://www.residentassistant.com/calendar/index.htm>-great for monthly themes/programming ideas!

<http://reslife.net/index.html>

<http://www.studentaffairslink.com/residentassistantlink/content.asp?c=7>

<http://www.paper-clip.com/>

<http://www.kimskorner4teachertalk.com/classmanagement/bb/otherbb.htm>

## **RESPECT**

### **RESPECTING OUR STUDENTS**

Caring for students is what we are all about. The students are the purpose of our jobs, and everything we do centers on caring for them. We are here to serve and protect them in the absence of their parents/guardians.

#### **Remember:**

- All students should be treated the same and all rules enforced consistently. Be equally strict or lenient with everybody.
- Do NOT give students whatever they want or cater to their whims.
- Be their friend, but never be their buddy.
- Always maintain the line of professionalism between the students and the staff.
- Authority can be dangerous. Apply only as needed and with extreme care.
- Always be polite and courteous. If you talk down to students, they will likely respond in kind.
- Address the students in the manner in which you would like to be addressed.
- Remember how it felt to be a teenager.

#### **Inappropriate Staff Behaviors**

- Never be rude or impolite in any way.
- Never be condescending or sarcastic.
- Never insult a student, even in jest.
- Never use obscene, profane, or vulgar language.
- Never say anything that might reflect unfavorably on you, our staff and program, or MSMS.
- Never say anything that you would not want repeated to a parent! (They are listening most of the time!)
- Never enter a student's room without knocking first.

Respect is a two-way street. The more you give, the more you will receive!

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

As a staff member you may be told information by any of several sources. It will require discretion by you.

You have access to students' personal information – home addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, medical, academic, and disciplinary records, etc.

- Personal information is to be kept strictly confidential.
- Never discuss student information in the open or in public (or semi-public) places.
- Never discuss one student's grades or discipline with other students.
- Never give out a student's personal information over the telephone.
- Occasionally you may handle documents containing confidential information. Often, though not always, they will be marked "Confidential." Also, watch for documents containing confidential information that may not be marked and handle them with the same care.

- If you are working with a confidential document and a student comes into the vicinity, turn the document face down or cover it. Do NOT let the student see it. When you are done using a confidential document, file it away or return it immediately.
- Any staff member found violating confidentiality will be held accountable. Consequences could include a written notice, counseling session or job termination.

## POSSIBLE COUNSELING ISSUES

Personal problems can range in seriousness from an inability to tolerate a roommate's taste in music to a feeling of alienation strong enough to lead to suicide. Sometimes merely having a friend is adequate help; but other times, extensive psychiatric treatment is needed. Staff members are not expected to be omnipotent. The HD on duty, DSA or any other member of the Residence Life professional staff should be consulted before it is too late to help a student! Here are some typical types of problems:

- Homesickness
- Family Crisis
- Difficulties With A Partner
- Reaction To Freedom
- Financial Problems
- Religious Concerns
- Conflicts With Roommates or Others
- Introversion or Extroversion
- Illness
- Academic Adjustment
- Vocational Problems

## Helpful Hints for Staff in Their Helping Relationships

Although you are not a fully trained counselor, many aspects of your work involve counseling approaches. Some basic techniques will prove important to you, regardless of the type of problem under immediate consideration, and even if your only goal is referral to a trained professional. Some points to remember:

- Be primarily a listener. Give definite indications when you understand what is being said, or ask for clarification where needed. This is work and requires considerable alertness to what is not quite spoken. Without presuming to interpret, you can help a person say what he/she is trying to say. **Do as little talking as possible.**
- Avoid judgmental reactions such as surprise, shock, or amusement unless you are genuinely sharing the student's feeling of deep concern or appropriate humor. That is, you must exhibit appropriate responses to show empathy, but the student must make his/her own judgments.
- Allow the student to make his/her own decisions and help the student explore alternatives. Obviously, this means you must remain objective, not becoming so involved that you act as a block to free explorations. Know your own feelings, and what they are doing to your view of the person's problems, so that you can avoid biased interference.
- Help the student focus on real problems, one at a time. The resident will often talk around his/her real concerns. However, you must be alert to the possibility that, in your eagerness to concentrate, you are

choosing the wrong “problem”. A number of false problems may have to be dispensed with before you can reach the core.

- Always try to keep aware of the feeling behind what the student is saying. This is more significant than the actual content of the student’s statements. His/her feeling may be sorrow, anger, pain, joy, etc. it has an emotional character and is the most important aspect to be recognized in the advisor’s relationship.
- Remember that the key to the entire relationship is your ability to demonstrate warmth, concern, and understanding. No amount of technique can replace simply liking the student and showing it. If you cannot bring yourself to like the individual, it would be wise to admit this to yourself and refer him/her to someone else before damage is done.
- Anytime you help a student, you should follow up to make sure he/she is feeling better or has met a deadline that that person has set for him/herself. Again, let the student know you are there when needed, but don’t push. This follow-up should be natural and should probably occur within a week of the talk.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND PROCEDURES**

### **FIRE PREVENTION**

Each staff member is an important ingredient in preventing a fire. The following are residence hall policies and guidelines for preventing fires:

- Candles, oil lamps, and other open-flame or continuous burning objects are not permitted (even for decoration purposes).
- Students may not place or store furniture, trash or personal belongings in the hallways.
- Keep posters and other combustible decorations to a minimum.
- Incense is not permissible. Air fresheners are acceptable as a plug-in or spray.
- Check electrical cords and appliances to insure they are in proper working order. Extension Cords are not allowed, only surge protectors can be used; however, only one surge protector may be used per outlet (surge protectors may not be plugged into other surge protectors).
- Check electrical outlets and surge protectors to insure they are not overloaded. Residence hall staff reserves the right to confiscate any electrical outlet or surge protector for health and safety reasons.
- Stairwell, hallway and fire doors should never be propped open.
- Halogen lamps, lava lamps and bulbs are prohibited in resident rooms.
- Students may not hang objects from fire alarms.

Students violating any of the above guidelines will face disciplinary action.

## **FIRE AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

The State Fire Code prohibits anyone from tampering with fire and safety equipment in the residence halls or in any campus building. Tampering includes pulling false fire alarms, discharging fire extinguishers, removing exit signs, and interfering with smoke detectors. Interference with smoke detectors mandates immediate attention. Students responsible will be assessed for the damages and for the hourly rate of the repair person's labor. All violators are subject to disciplinary action and possible criminal prosecution. The maximum civil penalty for malicious use of fire and safety equipment will be enforced.

## **FIRE DRILL PROCEDURE**

MSMS residence halls are required to conduct periodic fire drills each semester. Failure to respond appropriately to fire alarms will necessitate the scheduling of additional drills and disciplinary action against the resident(s) involved. If a resident fails to respond to a fire alarm he/she will be subject to disciplinary action. Residence Life staff and Campus Police reserve the right to enter student rooms to locate the source of the problem and to ensure that everyone has evacuated the building.

## **FIRE ALARM/EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

When the fire alarm sounds or in case of fire, the following procedures should be followed:

1. The staff member working the front desk should call Campus Police (241-7777) to report the alarm and contact the HD on duty.
2. Staff should facilitate the evacuation of students.
3. Direct evacuation assistance to students with special needs.
4. The HD on duty should bring the most recent copy of the residence hall floor chart and the guest ID book as everyone moves out of the building.
5. As staff members are leaving the building, they must knock on doors to indicate that people must leave the hall immediately. Under some circumstances, staff may be directed back inside the building (once it is safe) to check random rooms to ensure that residents have evacuated.
6. The HD on duty should complete the Fire Alarm Activation Report once the building is clear and give copy to DSA.

It is not the sole responsibility of the student to make sure they evacuate themselves from the building. It is the staff's responsibility to make sure no student remains in the building even during drills. Rooms must be keyed into if students are found to be missing once the building has been evacuated.



## TORNADO DRILLS

There will be a lot of times when a tornado warning goes into effect. It is imperative that the staff member react quickly, yet in an orderly fashion, when the tornado siren alarms. In the event of a tornado/hurricane warning (or other natural disaster):

- Close all doors and move toward the center of the building.
- Move all residents to the hallways of the bottom floors in each building.
- Have everyone lie face down with knees drawn under them and cover their heads with their arms.
- Tell them to wait for further instructions.
- Keep the following in mind during a natural disaster:
  - Stay away from windows and glass doors.
  - Remain indoors until Campus Police, local law enforcement, or hall staff gives the “all clear” notice.
  - Do not walk in, play in or drive through flooded areas. Floodwater contains hidden hazards and may be deeper and faster moving than it appears. Wear sturdy shoes (e.g. sneakers) at all times.
  - Stay away from downed power lines.
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or TV stations for evacuation instructions.
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately!
- If the staff members or residents are outside, move everyone quickly inside to a sturdy building. Go to the basement if one is available

## BOMB THREAT

Bomb threats and actual bomb emergencies present a serious threat to the public and property. Law enforcement must be able to effectively respond to all bomb threats, assess them and handle each to provide for the safety of the MSMS community. If a staff member receives a Bomb Threat:

1. Call Campus Police.
2. Notify the HD on duty who will then contact the DSA.
3. Follow all directions given by Campus Police and the HD on duty. Upon notification of a bomb threat from any source, the recipient shall immediately relay all available information to the Campus Police:
  - a. Exact location of bomb (if known)
  - b. Time of detonation (if known)
  - c. Description of the bomb (if known)
  - d. Type of explosive (if known)
  - e. Reason for bombing (if known)
  - f. Time of call

A Campus police officer will respond to interview the individual that received the threat.

The police officer will determine the need to evacuate and conduct a search of the facility for the bomb. The Campus Police dispatcher will notify the MUW Police Chief. If a bomb threat is received by telephone, the following actions should be taken:

1. Note the precise time the telephone call is received.
2. Attempt to obtain the following information from the caller:
  - a. Where has the bomb been placed?
  - b. What time is the bomb set to explode?
  - c. What type of bomb has been placed?

- d. In what type of container has the bomb been placed?
- e. How was the bomb delivered to the university?
- f. Try to note the characteristics of the caller:
  - i. Age
  - ii. Sex
  - iii. Characteristics of voice (lisp, accent, soft, loud)
  - iv. Background noises (radio, television, people)
  - v. Write down these characteristics for the information of police investigators.

If an evacuation order is given, leave the building but remain available to speak with authorities. (All emergency evacuation procedures should be followed.)

When an evacuation order is given, Residence Life & Housing student staff should knock on room doors on their way out of the building. Once outside, the student staff should identify themselves to the professional staff at the scene and await instruction. Student staff should be prepared to assist with crowd control and dissemination of information.

**If a bomb threat is received by letter or note, the following actions should be taken:**

1. Upon realizing that the letter or note constitutes a bomb threat, do not handle the letter, its envelope or enclosures. They may contain fingerprints that can be used as a means of identifying the person responsible for the act. Try not to place more fingerprints on any item. If the staff member must move the contents, handle all materials by the edges to the greatest degree possible.
2. Immediately notify MSMS Police.
3. Notify the DSA. Evacuation of the building will be determined by MSMS Police or other responsible MSMS officials.

**ALCOHOL INTERVENTION**

*When conducting Room Inspections, while making rounds, or just being in the residence hall, staff may come across residents possessing, consuming, or displaying alcohol. Below are 5 common alcohol incidents and the general procedural guidelines that should be followed when encountering these incidents. Remember each residence hall has a Breathalyzer for use. This should only be done by one the HD or a member of administration.*

**1. Remove alcohol bottles for decoration**

If a student possesses “empties” used for decoration, the staff member should confiscate immediately and explain that they cannot have alcohol bottles for decoration because MSMS/The Mississippi University for Women is a dry campus. Remind the students that they are minors and that possession of alcohol by a minor is against both state and federal law. The “empties” should be turned in to the HD. The HD on duty will notify the Director of Student Affairs for judicial proceedings to take place. If empty alcohol bottles are found during closing, remove them from the room. Make sure a copy of the Room Inspection Form is left for the student. Please complete an incident report including **room number, what was found, where it was found, and the students who live in that room.** Place the document in the HD’s mailbox.

## **2. Possession of alcohol bottles/cans**

If a student has possession of alcohol, ask the student to dump the alcohol out. The staff member should confiscate the bottles immediately after the student discards its content then explain that they cannot have alcohol because MSMS/MUW is a dry campus. The staff member should then complete an incident report and the evidence should be submitted to the HD with the documentation. Remind the students that they are minors and that possession of alcohol by a minor is against both state and federal law. The STAFF should express to the student that the incident requires documentation, as the possession of alcoholic beverages on campus is a violation of MSMS policy. The HD on duty will call the DSA and judicial proceedings will take place.

## **3. Intoxicated and disruptive students**

If a student or guest is drunk/visibly intoxicated and disorderly (i.e. being violent, using threatening language, etc.) and will not calm down, seek backup. Call for the HD on duty who will then call Campus Police for assistance and the DSA. Do not say or do anything that will escalate the situation. **Arguing with an intoxicated person or trying to engage them in rational conversation does not generally help the situation. Do not put anyone at risk.** It is better to contain, de-escalate, and follow up. • If the staff member suspects an alcohol overdose, contact Campus Police and the HD on duty for assistance, IMMEDIATELY. In each instance, the DSA will begin judicial proceedings.

## **4. Intoxicated but not disruptive**

If the student is drunk/visibly intoxicated but not disorderly, assess his or her intoxication level. If the student is falling down, unaware of surroundings, being carried in, vomiting or unconscious, seek backup/HD on duty and call Campus Police for medical assistance if necessary. **Note:** If a student vomits in a common area and appears to be able to clean up their mess, encourage to them to do so. (Residents will be billed if the mess is left for someone else to clean up.) However, this does not mean that the student will not be held accountable for their intoxication.

## **5. Suspected alcohol use**

If the staff member suspects students are drinking in their room, calmly follow up on the suspicion (with the HD on duty). First, ask the resident(s) if there is any alcohol in the room. If the staff member sees evidence of alcohol consumption in a room, it is reasonable to ask the residents to show the staff member the contents of the refrigerator. If alcohol is found, ask the students to pour it out. If they refuse to show what is in the refrigerator, try to convince them it is in their best interest to cooperate. Tell them "We can do this the hard way or the easier way. Don't make matters worse for yourself. If you don't show me, I will look myself." If the resident still refuses, staff may open the refrigerator.

If a student or guest tells you that a person is passed out in a room, the staff member is obligated to address the situation. Go to the room, knock and announce who is at the door before opening the door. If a person is indeed intoxicated, follow procedures used for dealing with intoxicated residents. Remember the safety of students comes first. When in doubt, err on the side of caution and get medical help. Fill out an incident report as soon as possible.

If the staff member suspects that residents of drinking in their room, discuss the concern with them and be sure they understand about the alcohol policy, the staff member's responsibility, and their consequences. If the staff member suspects that residents are drinking off campus, have a similar conversation with the residents. Your suspicion(s) should be reported to the HD on duty. The DSA will be notified as well.

## **DRUGS/MARIJUANA SUSPICION**

### ***Scenario #1***

If the staff member thinks they smell marijuana or someone tells the staff member that someone is presently smoking in their room:

1. Find another staff member to help confirm the smell.
2. If the staff member thinks it is marijuana, call the HD on duty. The HD on duty will call the DSA and Campus Police. If possible, do not confront the room until the Officer arrives. (If possible, one staff member should watch the room while the other calls. If people leave the room, try to get their information and ask them to wait in the hallway. Don't get into an argument if they resist.)
3. When Campus Police arrives, they will knock on the door and question the residents. They may request and conduct a consent search. If the resident refuses, the incident will be documented by both Campus Police and the staff member. Include reasons for the suspicion (smell, fans, incense, open windows, towels, glassy eyes, etc.) and the behavior of those present in the room.
4. The HD will contact the Administrator on duty and judicial proceedings will take place.

### ***Scenario #2***

If someone reports that someone else has drugs hidden in their room:

1. Ask:
  - a. How they know
  - b. How much and where the drugs are located
  - c. When did they last see the drugs
2. Contact the HD on duty
3. The HD will consult the DSA to determine the next course of action including possible Campus Police and Administrative involvement.

### ***Scenario #3***

If someone reports that a resident has (in the past) smoked marijuana or done other drugs in their room:

1. Follow up with the suspected resident. Have a private conversation in their room.
2. Tell them that it has been reported that they MAY be doing drugs.
3. Do not discuss who reported it, rather, emphasize the purpose of the conversation which is to find out the truth.
4. If they admit to doing drugs, ask them if they currently have any drugs in the room. (If they do, call the HD on duty. The Campus Police and the Administrator on duty or DSA will then be called and judicial proceedings will take place.
5. If they admit to having done drugs in the room in the past, express your concern and document what was reported and submit it to the HD on duty on an incident report within 24 hours.
6. If the resident gets defensive and denies everything, explain that accusations are not being made, and that the staff member is only following up on a concern and seeking clarification. MSMS takes these matters seriously. Assure the resident that if they are not doing drugs, they have nothing to worry about. However, if they are doing drugs, they are being warned to stop.
7. Refer the student to counseling to discuss their drug use or their questions about drug use. This referral is mandatory and your HD should be notified of this referral.
8. Notify your HD of the conversation had with the resident and how it went.
9. Follow up with the resident to keep lines of communication open.

#### **Scenario 4**

If the staff member walks in on a drug violation unexpectedly:

1. Address the situation despite being caught off guard.
2. Leave the room only if the staff member feels that they are in danger.
3. Be direct about what is suspected.
4. Observe and make mental notes of the situation.
5. Call the HD on duty.
6. Try to keep them in the room if possible. If they leave, do not chase after them.
7. Campus Police and the Administrator on duty will then be called and judicial proceedings will take place.

#### **RESIDENCE HALL RESPONSE PROTOCOL**

##### **Incidents involving spilled bodily fluid or waste in the common areas (blood, vomit, urine or feces)**

1. **Isolate the affected area and assess the situation** • Call to notify the HD on duty • Call Campus Police to dispatch an ambulance if medical attention is necessary. • Post signs in the immediate area to caution and redirect traffic. • If the person responsible is not immediately known, encourage the residents in the area to identify and locate the person so his/her physical condition can be assessed. Identifying the person responsible will also prevent the community from being charged for the cleaning.
2. **Clean the affected area** • If capable, the individual responsible should be instructed to clean up the spill immediately or face extra cleaning charges and disciplinary action (if applicable). • If the individual is incapable of cleaning the spill immediately, seal off the area as best as possible and notify Housekeeping. After hours, and when housekeeping is otherwise unavailable, Residence Life & Housing staff will contain the spill area to safeguard the community. • Spill Kits (available near the front desk) should be used to clean the spill and disinfect the area. Follow instructions for proper handling and disposal of the Spill Kit. **Caution: Blood cells can be present in all body fluids, so always use protection before attempting to clean an area.**
  1. Take proper precautions to prevent unnecessary exposure or contact with the spill.
  2. Always wear rubber gloves.
  3. Use eye protection if necessary.
  4. Clean all surfaces that have come into contact with the spill using a disinfecting agent like bleach or the wipe provided in the Spill Kit.
  5. Dispose of rags and towels properly (following Spill Kit instructions).
  6. If used, disinfect mop head and bucket thoroughly.
3. **Follow up as necessary** • Have a follow up conversation with residents directly involved in the incident to get a clear understanding of what happened. • Document the incident. • Notify the HD on Duty. • Leave Incident Report for the DSA.

APPENDIX A

MISS. CODE ANN. § 25-1-113  
EMPLOYEE CERTIFICATION AND AUTHORIZATION STATEMENT  
FOR THE MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL FOR MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

NOTICE

Section 25-1-113, Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended, prohibits the hiring for public employment of individuals who have been convicted of or pled guilty to the unlawful taking or misappropriation of public funds effective July 1, 2013. Effective July 1, 2014, the State cannot continue to employ a person who has been convicted or pled guilty to the unlawful misappropriation of public funds. Specifically, Section 25-1-113, has been amended by Senate Bill No. 2420 (approved by the Governor on March 14, 2023) to read as follows:

Commented [KK1]: I will send you a copy of this Senate Bill.

**From and after July 1, 2023, the state and any county, municipality or any other political subdivision shall not hire any person who appears on the registry created in Sections 1 through 6 of this act for any position in accounting, or in a treasury or registrar office, or in any office where monies are collected or received directly from rate or fee payers.**

EMPLOYEE CERTIFICATION AND AUTHORIZATION

I have been notified that as an employee of The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science I cannot have been convicted of or pled guilty in any court of this state, another state, or in federal court of any felony in which public funds were unlawfully taken, obtained or misappropriated in the abuse or misuse of my office or employment or money coming into my hands by virtue of my office or employment. I understand that any conviction of embezzlement will disqualify me from employment with The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science and will result in my termination.

I swear or affirm that I have never been convicted or pled guilty in any court of this state, another state, or in federal court of *any felony* in which public funds were unlawfully taken, obtained or misappropriated by the abuse or misuse of any office or employment or money coming into my hands by virtue of my office or employment.

I hereby authorize The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science to conduct a background check of my criminal history at any time as a condition of and/or subsequent to my employment. **I understand and acknowledge that I may revoke my permission for such background check. In such case, no background check investigation will be done and my employment may be terminated.** *I further understand and acknowledge that should the criminal background check occur and it establishes that I have been convicted or pled guilty to misuse of public funds in violation of Section 25-1-113 my employment will terminate and I will have no recourse against The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science or the Mississippi Department of Education.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Name – Printed