

FAMILY HANDBOOK



MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY
HIGHLAND PARK

2021-2022 School Year

MEHP is providing this handbook to help families navigate the inaugural school year. Policies, procedures, and information has been included to ensure we have a safe, healthy, and joyful school year.

Family Handbook

2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

Welcome to Montessori Elementary at Highland Park (MEHP)! This Family Handbook specifies many policies and procedures about school operations. Our team is committed to supporting families in their child's education. MEHP will strive to create an exceptional learning environment for all students. In partnership with parents/guardians, MEHP will collaborate with families to promote continuity between school and home. We hope to work closely with you to develop that relationship and prepare young women for the Chattanooga Girls Leadership Academy (CGLA) and young men for Chattanooga Preparatory School.

You can help your child prepare for school in the following ways:

- ❖ Ensure that your child attends school daily, on-time, in uniform, and ready to learn.
- ❖ Ensure that your child completes all assigned work. Check your child's work regularly.
- ❖ Ensure that your child reads and/or read to your child daily.
- ❖ Keep the school informed if your child has any unique needs or has experiences that we should know about to support your child.

There are many other ways that you can be involved with our school:

- ❖ Participate in family meetings, educational events, and fun activities at school.
- ❖ Attend student performances at school.
- ❖ Inform us about community events in which we should participate.
- ❖ Carpool with other families.
- ❖ Attend Family Conferences with your child's teacher.
- ❖ Volunteer with enrichment classes.

Please sign and return the Commitment form at the end of this handbook stating you have read and understand MEHP's policies. MEHP looks forward to partnering with families to ensure each student has a great year.

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“Children are endowed with a power that enables them to reconstruct things which are very complex, and they do so with a great deal of pleasure.” —Maria Montessori, The 1946 London Lectures

Mission

The mission of Montessori Elementary at Highland Park is to cultivate ambitious, fearless learners through intellectually stimulating, interactive experiences that awaken curiosity, nurture advanced thinking, and promote independence.

Vision

To establish a trajectory for lifelong learning and self-directed discovery that enables children to reach their full potential as intellectually engaged learners and ethically focused leaders.

Core Values

<p>Respect</p>	<p>The basis of the Montessori classroom is mutual respect. A Classroom based on mutual trust creates trustworthy children. Respect and trust go hand in hand. By respecting the individual children in their care, Montessori teachers continue to aid the intellect, emotional and moral development of their students.</p>
<p>Responsibility</p>	<p>In Montessori education children take responsibility for their own learning. This style of learning is now referred to as “constructivist.” But children cannot construct their own learning until they are responsible for making their own choices. If they are forced to learn and do not know why they are doing it, they merely go through the motions. They feel as if they have no control over their lives and learning can become something that they endure, rather than something that they accomplish by their own self-effort.</p>
<p>Self-discipline</p>	<p>To accomplish self-discipline is one of the great tasks of life. Responsibility requires discipline. To discipline yourself you must have the freedom to make choices. They must have the opportunity to control themselves, by themselves. They must not be constantly controlled by others, because this imposes discipline from the outside and does not give the child the opportunity to learn by him or herself.</p>
<p>Independence</p>	<p>To be independent, the child must be free to make choices, make mistakes, learn from those mistakes, and have the opportunity to self-correct. We guide them in their growth as we prepare a learning and social environment in which they can make their way toward independence.</p>
<p>Creativity & Innovation</p>	<p>The creative powers of the children help them solve problems throughout their stay in the Montessori classroom. These problems can be social, emotional, intellectual, or physical in nature. By allowing the children to grapple with these problems and ideas we help them enlist their own creativity. When children are not permitted to deal with their own problems as they arise, but have adults solve them for them, they have difficulty experiencing their own creative solutions. To teach children in only one way, and ask for only one answer, will prevent them from using their minds in an inventive way.</p>
<p>Self-motivation</p>	<p>Children are self-motivated when they can make choices and have some sense of control over what they elect to do. This does not mean that they do whatever they please. In the Montessori classroom we are looking for intrinsic motivation as opposed to extrinsic motivation. Children work because they want to – not to get a grade, to please an adult, or because they will get in trouble for fail if they do not do what the teacher requires. (Montessori Today, P.90.)</p>
<p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Montessori students often work collaboratively within their multi-age classroom groupings, learning with and from one another. Because children have different talents, skills, and interests, the groups that form together to help each other are constantly changing. The nature of a collaborative environment is that it feels very reasonable and safe. A child can always turn to another child for help. This is made easier in the multi-aged classroom. It also helps older children when they explain things to younger students. It clarifies their knowledge when they must articulate it to someone else.</p>
<p>Leadership</p>	<p>Children who have been allowed to take responsibility for their work and have developed an essential level of self-discipline and responsibility experience high self-esteem and are prepared for life. They have the requisite skills to go on to higher education, to be successful at what they attempt, and to step forth into the world with the leadership and problem-solving skills that they will need to successfully face the tasks that await them.</p>

Introduction

The purpose of the Montessori Elementary at Highland Park (MEHP) student and family handbook is to provide a clear and central source of information about everyday aspect of life at MEHP. Families should review this handbook before the first days of school. Students and their families must review this book, as it provides answers to almost any general MEHP question. Parents and students are responsible for upholding the handbook expectations.

Montessori Method

MEHP follows the educational philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori. As the first female doctor to graduate from the University of Rome, Maria Montessori used a scientific approach of observation to develop the Montessori Method. Over time, the new model of education emerging from the “Children’s House” in Rome, Italy became an inspiration to parents and teachers across the globe. There are key elements to a Montessori environment including: fully trained Montessori guides, mixed ages of children in the classrooms, use of specific Montessori multisensory materials, uninterrupted periods of engaged learning where students have some choice in activities and where, when, and how long they work on them. Other components of a Montessori environment include valuing and encouraging concentration, independence, self-expression, and self-direction.

Students are encouraged to study a variety of subjects in liberal arts and science. As students develop their abilities and discover other interests, our guides (the teachers and educational assistants) foster a love of learning while ensuring students receive developmentally appropriate skills. We balance respecting the child’s true natural curiosity with a responsibility to learn basic skills. This is referred to as Freedom within Limits. All humans must have limits to develop self-control. Additionally, students need to take risks to gain confidence in their abilities. In our classrooms, we want to inspire both the risk of trying something new and accountability in completing assigned tasks.

“The child who concentrates is immensely happy.” —Maria Montessori *The Absorbent Mind*

Anti-Discrimination

MEHP believes in an inclusive, anti-bias environment. MEHP encompasses children of diverse races, religious and ethnic backgrounds as well as learners with different talents, personalities, abilities, and learning styles. While valuing diversity, we embrace all cultures and acknowledge that there are multiple approaches to resolving issues. Staff and families are encouraged to work together to ensure the prevention of discrimination practices.

School Day

The school day is 8:15 am - 3:15 pm. Students arriving after 8:15 am must have a parent or guardian escort them into the school and sign in with office personnel.

School Calendar

See MEHP website for updated calendar.

Change of Information

Whenever there is a change in telephone number, address, and other vital information, parent/guardian must contact the registrar by calling the front office. Inability to contact a parent or legal guardian during emergency situations may result in contacting the appropriate authorities.

Attendance Policy

Daily attendance must be taken and reported for all students attending PreK- Grade 12. Attendance is a key factor in student achievement, and therefore students are expected to be present and on time each day that school is in session. Students and parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring regular school attendance. Unexcused absences are prohibited by law. MEHP follows [TDOE Student Membership and Attendance procedures Manual](#) and believes that regular attendance is a key factor in academic achievement and social wellness of students.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Absences for grades PreK-5 shall be classified as either excused or unexcused as determined by the head of school or designee. Excused absences shall include:

- ❖ Doctor Notes.
- ❖ Illness or incapacitating condition of a family member that requires temporary absence.
- ❖ Death in the family.
- ❖ Validated court appearances of the student.
- ❖ Religious observances (TCA 49-6-3007 and -3017(c));
- ❖ One day absence when the parent/guardian or custodian is deployed for military service and one day absence when the parent/guardian or custodian returns from military service.
- ❖ Circumstances which, in the judgment of the school, create emergencies over which the student has no control.

MEHP does not accept parent/guardian notes as an excused absence for any reason. Medical/doctor notes are accepted as an excused absence.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

MEHP's attendance policy for absences is as follows:

- ❖ Third Absence - Parent/student conference
- ❖ Fourth Absence - Parent/student conference with the guidance counselor
- ❖ Fifth Absence - Legal Notice mailed to parent/guardian. Conference with administration per TDOE, MEHP and HCDE attendance policy.
- ❖ Sixth Absence and Seventh Absence- Attendance Contract
- ❖ Eighth Absence (Tier 2) and Ninth Absence - Referral to School Truancy Officer and counselor. Failure to fulfill Tier 2 requirements will result in immediate referral to HCDE Truancy Board.
- ❖ Tenth Absence – Certified letter will be mailed to student's home stating that the family MUST attend the HCDE Truancy Board hearing.
- ❖ Eleventh Absence and above – Petition filed.

PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCES

Pre-arranged absences are unexcused. Students may make up work. Parents of students who need to arrange for a planned absence for their child must make a formal request in writing to the principal a week prior to absence. If the principal agrees to the planned absence, the student is given a form that his/her teachers must sign. Students who have pre-arranged absences are responsible for making up work. They must get their make-up work before the date of pre-arranged absence. Decision for due date will be made at the discretion of administration.

APPEALS

Disputes over whether an absence is excused or unexcused shall be decided by the principal (or designee). After meeting with the parent/guardian, the principal will send the parent/guardian a letter confirming his or her decision and ensure that the student's attendance record is adjusted accordingly. The principal's decision can be appealed to the operator's designee, as specified in the principal's decision confirmation letter.

MAKE-UP WORK

Students are excused for the day(s) of absence, not the material covered in his/her classes. Therefore, it is the student's responsibility to request make-up work in all subject matter covered during his/her absence. All missed class work or tests (whether from excused or unexcused absence) may be made up provided both that the student makes the request immediately upon returning to school and that class time is not disproportionately taken from other students. If a student is absent two days, work must be turned in within two school days of absence. The make-up work policy only applies to work assigned during the period of absence. If work was due on the day of absence, it must be turned in on the day of return.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES: The Head of School / Designee Shall Be Responsible for Ensuring

- ❖ Parents are notified of attendance laws (via this handbook), expectations, and consequences for absences.
- ❖ Monitoring and documenting attendance, tardiness, and absences daily, including written verification of excused absences and tardiness (including from official sources, such as doctors, if necessary).
- ❖ Communicating with families regarding absences.
- ❖ Updating the school's student information system for reporting to the district and state.
- ❖ Unexcused absence procedures are implemented, including timely parent communication, developing attendance intervention plans, and required notifications.
- ❖ Providing parents or students with trustworthy contacts at the school with whom they may speak regarding attendance issues resulting from other personal issues.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE PROCEDURES & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Tennessee law (TCA 49-6-3001) requires that all children between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) attend school. If a student is absent without an excuse, the school may implement varying parent communications and school-based interventions to encourage regular attendance. Once a student who is kindergarten-age or above accumulates 10 unexcused absences in a single school year, he/she is considered "truant" and his/her attendance record will be reported to the TN Department of Education, as well as the family. Each successive accumulation of five unexcused absences shall also be reported. If a parent or legal guardian fails to take appropriate action with three days of truancy notification, the case may be referred to Juvenile Court, the District Attorney's Office, and/or the Department of Children's Services for appropriate legal action.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES AND PREK-AGED STUDENTS

MEHP will consider 10 accumulated days of unexcused absences as grounds for dis-enrollment from the free, voluntary PreK program. We will maintain attendance policies appropriate for state, district, and federal funding, and if a family is unwilling or unable to meet our attendance policy, we must consider offering the PreK placement to another family in need. MEHP will make reasonable efforts to communicate with and assist families prior to dis-enrolling of a PreK student for truancy.

Tardy Policy

Tardiness can have a significant negative effect on students in terms of missed learning opportunities (e.g. 15 minutes late every day is equal to missing 45 hours - over an entire week of school - over the year). It can also be highly disruptive to the class when one or more children arrive late. MEHP has the legal authority to consider multiple tardiness to be equivalent to an absence, in which cases truancy rules could apply. MEHP will reasonably notify families should this be exercised.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Unless there is an emergency, no early dismissal is allowed after 2:30 pm. Any student leaving school grounds (between 8:15 am and 3:15 pm, or once signed into the school) must always be signed out by a parent, legal guardian, or the documented designee. In order to minimize waiting time, a note should be sent to the office the morning of a student's early dismissal. If a signed-out student returns during the same school day, he/she must be signed in by a parent, legal guardian, or the documented designee.

“Do not tell them how to do it. Show them how to do it and do not say a word. If you tell them, they watch your lips move. If you show them, they will want to do it themselves.” —Maria Montessori

Transportation

BUS RIDER

MEHP uses a contracted bus service that will pick students up from designated locations in Chattanooga and bring them to school Monday through Friday. All bus riders will arrive to school in time to eat breakfast each morning. If there is an available bus stop in your area, students may be eligible for bus service. Bus stop locations will be posted on the website just before school begins.

Students who earn bus referrals may be suspended from bus privileges for an extended period. Bus transportation to school is a privilege. State law does not require that schools provide transportation. Students should plan to arrive approximately 10 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time of their bus. The drivers strive to stay on schedule however, traffic and/or weather conditions can affect their actual arrival time at your stop. If students are planning to ride a different bus home, they must bring a note from their parent or legal guardian giving permission to ride another bus. The student must bring the note to the front office before 9:00AM and must receive a permission form before they will be allowed on the bus.

CAR RIDER – ALL CAR RIDERS MUST BE RELEASED TO A PARENT/ GURADIAN WITH PROPER ID. Families wishing to drive their children to and from MEHP may follow the periodically published guidelines for car riders. School staff will indicate flow of traffic using appropriate signage. You may turn off the vehicle and wait but **MUST remain in the car**. If leaving your vehicle, it must be park in designated parking. Our staff members will greet children at their cars in the morning, and escort children to their cars in the afternoon. Your cooperation will enhance student safety and allow bus traffic to flow without delays.

All car riders will be dismissed from the designated location. Parents are expected to pick up their student in the designated car rider line. Parents are expected to pick up their child no later than 3:30 p.m. After 3:30 p.m. the student must report to the office or should already be on their way to designated aftercare programs. If parents/guardians arrive after 3:30, they must enter the building to sign out their child. MEHP does not offer aftercare for students not picked up by 3:30 and reserves the right to report safety concerns and issues to Child Protective Services if students are not picked up on time.

WALKERS – ALL WALKERS MUST BE RELEASED TO A PARENT/GURADIAN WITH A PROPER ID.

More information on Dismissal for Car Line and Walkers will be sent home before school begins.

Classroom Expectations

A responsible classroom is one in which a teacher exhibits an attitude of respect for students; has a positive influence in helping students develop good citizenship traits; plans a challenging curriculum to meet the needs of all students; and provides instruction using various methods, deliveries, and strategies.

The teacher is responsible for creating a positive classroom climate conducive to learning. This is done through the establishment of clear expectations and consistent classroom practices.

Strategies for creating a positive classroom include:

- ❖ Awareness of individual student needs (academic, physical, social, and emotional)
- ❖ Clear and concise classroom rules
- ❖ Consistent reinforcement of rules
- ❖ Appropriate responsiveness from administrators and support staff
- ❖ Clear documentation of classroom concerns when referrals are made to administrators and support staff.

Enrollment Preferences and Procedures

MEHP will admit students based on a first come, first served basis. Completing the application and submitting the required supplemental documentation within the priority application period ensures your place in line. If we receive more completed application packets than the number of open student seats available for the current school year, we will initiate a lottery as mandated by the state of Tennessee.

“Education must begin at birth.” —Maria Montessori, *The 1949 London Lectures*

PRE-K ENROLLMENT

PreK is available on a limited basis, prioritizing need, as informed by state policy and program funds. Publicly funded PreK seats have no tuition. Children must be 4 years old but not 5, by August 15th; a limited number of 3 years old may participate based on need and availability of seats in our program. Applicants are invited to an enrollment screening process, which includes income eligibility information. If there are more eligible applicants than seats available, admissions are based on a review of eligibility and at-risk factors below and preferences outlined here.

PRE-K INCOME ELIGIBILITY

We prioritize among applicants based on need. 90% of PreK seats are targeted for income eligible students. The gross income threshold by household size to be considered income eligible is as follows:

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
2	\$3,228
3	\$3,988
4	\$4,805
5	\$5,574
6	\$6,343
7	\$6,487
8	\$6,631

OTHER PRE-K AT-RISK FACTORS TO SCREEN FOR PRIORITIZATION MAY INCLUDE:

- ❖ Educationally at-risk based on educational assessment, or residence in priority zone
- ❖ Circumstances of abuse or neglect
- ❖ Parent deployed in active military duty
- ❖ TN Early Intervention (not qualifying for special education); or Speech or developmental delay
- ❖ Participating in public support program, e.g. WIC, SSI, Even Start; prior Head Start participant
- ❖ Being raised by a teenage parent, or other than biological parent, a guardian, or in state custody
- ❖ Identified as English Language Learners; other language, or multiple languages, spoken at home

Breakfast

MEHP contracts with a local vendor to provide meals to students during the school day. The food vendor adheres to the federal lunch guidelines. If your child needs breakfast, please arrive at the school between 7:30 and 7:45 am.

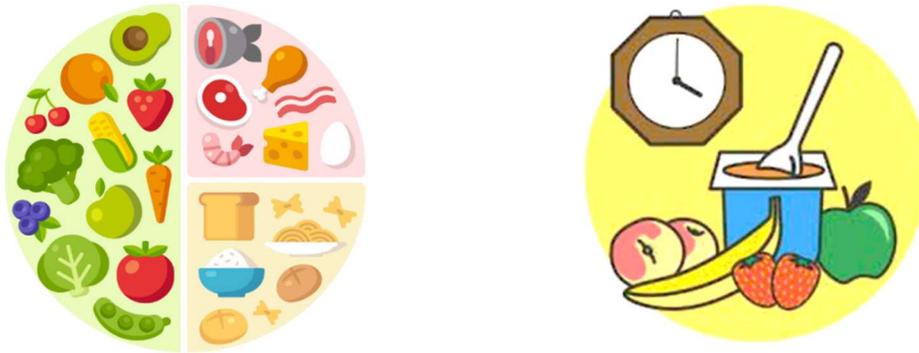
- PreK and Kindergarten Car Riders should be dropped off on Union Ave and staff will walk students to their classrooms.
- PreK and Kindergarten Walkers should be dropped off at the Union Entrance and staff will walk students to their classrooms.
- Elementary Car Riders should be dropped off on Union Ave and are walked through the school to the cafeteria for breakfast.
- Elementary Walkers should be dropped off at the cafeteria entrance on Kirby for breakfast no later than 7:45 am.
- Bus Riders (K-5th grade) will be greeted on the bus and walked to the cafeteria or classrooms by staff upon arrival for breakfast.

Lunch

MEHP contracts with a local vendor to provide meals to students during the school day. The food vendor adheres to the federal lunch guidelines. Per guidelines, fast food items are not allowed during lunch. Healthy eating habits should start early! All families are welcome to participate in our school food program. However, some families may choose to send their child with a lunch or snack. We ask that they follow these guidelines:

- ❖ Please only pack lunches that can be served at room temperature; we cannot heat up lunches for children. Furthermore, the lunches will not be refrigerated during the school day, so please do not send food that could spoil at room temperature.
- ❖ No drinks other than water are permitted in home-packed lunches. Milk is available in the cafeteria for any child and children are always welcome to get water from our filtered water fountains. In addition, children may choose to bring a plain, reusable water bottle to class. Juice and other sugary drinks can be unhealthy and can spill leaving a sticky mess, leave juice and other drinks at home.
- ❖ While we honor any dietary preferences or restrictions that your family may follow at home, please refrain from bring junk food into the school.

Example of lunch healthy lunch choices:



SNACKS AND ALLERGIES

When possible, students can learn how to prepare certain snacks as part of their works in the Montessori classroom (i.e. peeling a carrot, slicing an apple, etc.), and as our gardening program develops, children will learn how to harvest vegetables and fruits we grow at school. Guidelines for safe snack practices and procedures will be shared by your classroom teacher in August and during the school year.

Due to individual student allergies and other safety concerns, students may not share items brought from home with other students. Students are expected to follow the classroom and lunchroom guidelines and expectations.

To maintain a safe school environment for our students with life-threatening food and other allergies, MEHP asks all families whose children have documented food allergies to tell the school immediately! Please help keep all students safe by following these procedures. If your child's classroom notifies you that it is nut-free, snacks must be free of nuts or nut butters, such as peanut butter, Nutella, etc..

If you would like to send something with your child for a special occasion (i.e., birthday), you are strongly encouraged to send non-food items for your child to share with the class. Colorful pencils, erasers, or play do make good non-food treats. If you choose to send a food item for the class to share, it will need to be store-

bought with an intact ingredient label (in case there are nuts, etc., that we need to be aware of). Allergy information on the label should ensure that the treat is free of all nuts and nut ingredients. Ask your child's teacher for guidance before sending in treats for the classroom.

Dress Code and Uniforms

The wearing of uniforms is a requirement at MEHP. Uniforms must be clean and in good condition. The school will notify parents in writing of the uniform, cost, and recommended vendor for uniform purchase. Parents are strongly advised to use the suggested uniform site to ensure your child's uniform is acceptable attire for school. By not following the recommended uniform site parents may risk having their child in unacceptable attire. Our goal of our uniform policy is to create a respectful learning environment, eliminate distractions, and enable children to be independent. A school administrator is the final decision maker regarding the appropriateness of student' dress and appearance.

MEHP SHIRTS

- ❖ Approved school polo shirt with MEHP logo.
- ❖ Shirts must be tucked-in for 1st grade and up.
- ❖ MEHP will have an online vender for uniforms in July 2021 and will send information to families.
- ❖ Children may wear a MEHP navy, teal or grey solid-colored sweater, fleece, pullover, or cardigan.
- ❖ Coats are not to be worn in the classrooms.

PANTS / SKIRTS / BOTTOMS

- ❖ Solid-colored navy or khaki uniform pants, shorts, skort, skirts or dress.
- ❖ Shorts, skirts, and dresses should be at least knee-length.
- ❖ Leggings, tights, or shorts are permitted in solid navy or black underneath skirts or dresses.
- ❖ No sweatpants, athletic gear, or jeggings as pants.
- ❖ Pants must be worn at the waist; no sagging of pants will be permitted.
- ❖ All students wearing pants with belt loops must wear a belt with their uniform in 1st grade and up.

FOOTWEAR

- ❖ Children should have two pairs of shoes. One pair must be play shoes that are appropriate for outdoor play, P.E., and recess. Play shoes will get dirty!
- ❖ Indoor shoes should have non-slip soles and close around the foot.
- ❖ Shoes should be easy for children to put on and remove independently.
- ❖ Shoes must always be worn both indoors or outdoors.
- ❖ For safety, no heels, "heelies," flip flops, sandals, open toed shoes, etc.
- ❖ Socks or tights must be plain and solid colored.

ACCESSORIES* - MEHP Students May Wear Modest Jewelry.

- ❖ One pair of stud earrings only.
- ❖ For safety, no rings, chains, or bracelets may be worn to school by students.
- ❖ Hats and hoodies may not be worn inside the school building.
- ❖ If a headband is worn, it must be plain and unadorned (e.g., no cat ears, unicorn horns, etc.)

Change of clothes: PreK and Kindergarten children are required to have one emergency change of clothes including shirt, pants and underwear kept at school.

****Medical or religious exemptions to this policy must be approved by the principal.***

GUIDELINES FOR BACKPACKS AND OUTERWEAR:

MEHP believes all students have their own independent, unique style and preferences, but we reserve school attire for unity and community awareness. Creative expressions in the classroom through engaged learning is encouraged. However, please stick to these guidelines regarding lunchboxes, outer garments, and backpacks:

- No markings, logos, patterns, textures (including no “distressed” garments, etc.)
- No characters or superheroes.

MEHP reserves the right to require students to call home and get a change of clothes if any item of clothing is deemed unacceptable.

“To let the child do as he likes when he has not yet developed any powers of control, is to betray the idea of freedom Real freedom, instead, is a consequence of development; it is the development of latent guides, aided by education.” Maria Montessori — *The Absorbent Mind*

Code of Conduct - Discipline Guidelines

LEVEL ONE

Student behavior will be addressed by the teacher in the classroom. The teacher is expected to contact parent(s) if Level 1 behaviors persist. Examples of Level 1 behaviors: (Disruption to class, not completing assignments, sleeping in class, willful disobedience, interruption of others working, etc.).

LEVEL TWO

At level 2 the student may take a break in or out of the classroom and a Level 2 form will be completed by the sending teacher and sent home. During the break, an adult will remind, reflect, and guide a student to what they could have done differently. Teachers are expected to contact parents for Level 2 and parents are expected to conference with teachers if the behavior persists. Behaviors that persist will be referred to school administration. The teacher may use, but not be limited to:

- ❖ Break(s)
- ❖ Reminders of rules (not in front of others)
- ❖ Reflective language
- ❖ Redirection to another work or task
- ❖ Teacher-student conference(s)
- ❖ Phone call to parent/guardian
- ❖ Teacher-parent conference

LEVEL THREE

Student will be referred to talk to case manager about their behavior. Once the case manager has spoken with the student, they will contact the student’s parents via phone call or email. Repeated misbehavior by the student may result in administration, teacher, parent-student conference, or additional discipline action. Repeated level two and three behaviors require a behavior plan and parent conference.

LEVEL FOUR

Examples of level four infractions: threats, bullying, fighting, property damage, stealing, verbal or written aggression, possession of weapons, etc. These behavior by the student will result in an automatic referral to the school’s administrator or repeated level three behaviors.

The administrator may use, but not be limited to:

- ❖ Parent contact or parent conference
- ❖ Assign a behavior contract
- ❖ Detention
- ❖ Assign work detail
- ❖ Assign in-school suspension
- ❖ Suspend (1 to 5 days)

**It should be clearly understood that suspensions and expulsions are penalties of last resort, to be imposed only after other possible alternative forms of discipline have been used.

Please note the following: When students are suspended from school, they are expected to complete all assignments missed in accordance with district policy, administrative guidelines and/or school rules.

Harassment, Bullying and Intimidation

“Harassment” means any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal, or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee that:

- ❖ Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property
- ❖ Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities, or benefits; or
- ❖ Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school.

“Bullying” means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students and may involve:

Teasing	Physical violence
Social exclusion	Theft
Threat	Sexual or racial harassment
Intimidation	Public humiliation
Stalking	Destruction of property

The definitions of “bullying” and “harassment” include retaliation against a student or school employee by another student or school employee for asserting or alleging an act of bullying or harassment. Reporting an act of bullying or harassment that is not made in good faith is considered retaliation.

Perpetuation of conduct by an individual or group with intent to humiliate, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause physical harm to a student or school employee, by:

- ❖ Incitement or coercion.
- ❖ Accessing or knowingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system; or
- ❖ Acting in a manner that has an effect substantially like the effect of bullying or harassment.

Alleged victims (or their parents or guardians) of harassment, intimidation, bullying shall report such incidents immediately to the Executive Director or Principal. Any reports made to staff should be forwarded to one of these authorities immediately, but no later than 24 hours of the expressed concern. Anonymous reports may be made; however, disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report.

MEHP shall enact and enforce policy as an act of commitment to (1) ensuring that all students have the right to attend school free from sex-based discrimination which includes sexual harassment, (2) maintaining a safe school environment that is free from harassment and discrimination where students are treated with civility and respect, (3) eliminating sex-based discrimination, harassment, and misconduct and repairing the harm it causes to individuals and to school communities through age-appropriate preventative and responsive strategies that empower survivors of harassment, ensure school safety, and support positive behavioral change; (4) providing support and encouragement to victims of sexual harassment in reporting potential violations of District policy; and (5) providing due process to those accused of violating this policy.

Suicide Prevention

MEHP is committed to protecting the health and well-being of all students and understands that physical, behavioral, and emotional health are integral components of student achievement. All faculty and staff are expected to be proactive in maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment and to immediately report to the building principal any indications that a student may be in danger of harming self or others. Students are strongly encouraged to report if they, or another student, are feeling suicidal or in need of help. A summary of available resources shall be annually updated and posted for students.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255

Child Abuse and Neglect

School personnel are required by state laws to watch for signs of child abuse and neglect. They are also required by law to report any information or suspicions to the proper authorities.

**Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Call 855-CRISIS-1 (855-274-7471) or Text “TN” to 741-741**

Academic Policies and Procedures

Classroom Schedules

See your child's teacher for posted classroom schedules.

Exceptional Learning

All eligible students must receive an appropriate education in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) under the guidelines of the IDEA. Each eligible student has a required Individual Education Plan (IEP) that mandates goals, objectives, modifications, and accommodations for learning in the LRE. Any teacher that teaches students with an IEP is required to read, commit to, and sign the IEP prior to the issuance of the first progress report. The teacher must be familiar with the student's educational goals, accommodations and modifications to provide the student with the LRE. Teachers will also appropriately monitor the student's progress. IEPs are reviewed annually during an IEP meeting with all decisions being made as a team. For a legal IEP meeting to be held the following participants are required to be present: Administrator, Exceptional Education service providers, parent, or guardian of student (if they choose to participate), regular education teacher and any other service providers. The student's attendance is optional but encouraged when appropriate. All evaluations are confidential. Evaluations for eligibility will be completed within 40 school days from date of the initial referral.

Homework Policy

MEHP strives to partner with parents in their learning and development. First and foremost, homework should always include reading to and with your child every day. Please set aside time to read and discuss books with your children for a minimum of 20 minutes each day. Independent readers should also engage in reading as a daily practice at home. Additional homework and homework policies will be sent by your teachers in August.

Grading Policy

MEHP is a standards-based grading school. Montessori Elementary at Highland Park has implemented Standards Based Grading (SBG) in the inaugural school year. You will have an opportunity to track your child's progress by logging into Transparent Classroom. Parents are expected to use the site to check progress regularly. You can expect to have updated records weekly with photos or completed work in Transparent Classroom.

Two Ways of Reporting:

- PowerSchool will give you access to view absence record and overall grade for each subject.
- Transparent Classroom gives you access to your child's ongoing progress in the classroom with an emphasis on Montessori aligned to TN State Standards.

MEHP Grading:

Teachers use observation, formative assessments, summative assessments, and rubrics (example below) to measure student mastery on each standard. The school-wide rubric is as follows:

	Criteria	Verbs of Bloom's Taxonomy
0/Red	- No effort or evidence	NA
1: Significantly below expectations/ Red	-Evidence of knowledge	<u>KNOWLEDGE</u> Recall, List, Locate, Name, Define, Describe, Observe
2: Below expectations/Approaching/Yellow	-Evidence of comprehension -Needs coaching/feedback to reach standard/learning goal -Developing mastery	<u>UNDERSTAND</u> Explain, Describe, Summarize, Predict, Demonstrate
3: Meeting Expectations/Proficient /Green	- Execute/ show evidence of mastery -Meets standard/learning goal	<u>APPLY</u> Solve, Calculate, Interpret, Examine
4: Above Expectations/Mastery/Blue	-Goes beyond standard /learning goal -Evidence of thinking at an advanced level	<u>ANALYZE</u> Classify, Connect, Criticize, Organize <u>SYNTHESIZE/</u> <u>EVALUATE</u> Judge, Conclude, Debate, Justify, Persuade <u>CREATE</u> Design, Compose, Plan, Construct

Required Assessment

MEHP students will have a minimum of three (3) universal screeners through the year to assess student's performance, inform planning and drive instruction. Parents/guardians will receive a letter, email or report and information regarding assessments and how they are used in the school.

TN READY: Third grade and up will complete the TN Ready individually and receive a score and feedback from the school when it is released from the state. Students' overall grade is calculated using our MEHP grading policy. Through this grading platform, you and your child can see what she understands and has learned in real time. Additionally, grades should align with universal screeners and assessments in when appropriate.

Progress Report and Parent Communication

Progress reports for Kindergarten and Elementary students consist of the student's current grade, absences, conduct, and any comments the teacher wishes to make. The dates of progress reports are:

- ❖ First Nine Weeks: September 10
- ❖ Second Nine Weeks: November 19
- ❖ Third Nine Weeks: February 4
- ❖ Fourth Nine Weeks: April 22

Remember that end of quarters and report cards are as follows:

- ❖ First Quarter: August 5 – October 8; Report card: October 25
- ❖ Second Quarter: October 18 – December 17; Report card: January 10
- ❖ Third Quarter: January 5 – March 18; Report card: March 28
- ❖ Fourth Quarter: March 21 – May 25; Report card: May 31 (mailed)

Report card and conference dates will be posted on the Master Calendar on the school's website. Requests for parent-teacher conferences can be made through your child's teacher via email.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Effective communication between home and school is essential to the success of your child here at school. Each child has a Daily Communication folder. Important information such as permission forms, homework, etc. is sent home in the children's communication folders. Please send this folder with your child every morning and check it each night to ensure timely communication. Notes to teachers can go back to school in this folder. The folders are checked every day and sent home every afternoon.

PowerSchool Reporting

Students in Grades 3-5 will receive a traditional numerical grade in PowerSchool. Grades in PowerSchool will be entered at the end of the course. The numerical grade will depend on standards mastered throughout the year. Teachers should upload two grades weekly but each subject in PowerSchool for parents to review.

To earn an A: 93-100%.

To earn a B: 85-92%.

To earn a C: 75-84%.

To earn a D: 70-74%.

To earn an F: 69% or lower.

Students and parents will receive login credentials to MEHP Learning and PowerSchool to continually track student progress. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the school at 423-702-7230.

For more information concerning TN Ready standards visit <http://tn.gov/education/topic/academic-standards>.



STEAM and Project Based Learning

MEHP students will participate in a STEM each semester. Students will present their research-based project as a team to parents, faculty, staff, and other community members during the year. Dates and times: TBD.

Technology Usage

Students are expected to adhere to the Responsible Use Policy. When a student is unable to do so, he/she could lose the privilege of using school issued laptop as well as any personal computers or electronic devices. Students using social media sites or other sites without permission from a teacher during the school day will receive an office referral AND the computer will be returned to the IT department indefinitely.

Cell phones must remain off and in students' backpacks or with a teacher throughout the day.

English Language Learners

English Language Learners (ELL) are non-English language background students whose level of oral, reading, and written proficiency in English does not allow them to fully benefit from the curriculum and creates difficulty in regular classroom curriculum without specially designed modifications. ELL students have not yet met the definition of fluent English proficient (FEP). If the inability to understand, speak, read, or write the English language excludes a student from effective participation in the educational programs offered by the school, the school shall take appropriate action to rectify the English language deficiency to provide the student equal access and participation in its programs. The school shall develop and periodically update a local plan for providing ESL services for students whose native or dominant language is not English. The plan for implementation of appropriate instruction and ESL services for students who have limited English proficiency shall be in accordance with the current Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards of the State Board of Education, and state, and federal law.

Other Policies and Procedures

Visitors / Volunteers

All visitors/volunteers should have made prior arrangements to visit/volunteer at the school and **MUST** present a valid state issued ID, sign in at the main reception desk, and always wear a visitor's badge. Parents or guardians that need to request a conference with a school administrator must schedule an appointment in advance. Administrators are not available for walk-in conferences! Appointments can be scheduled by calling the front office. Administration reserves the right to ask a visitor to leave if they become a disruption to the learning environment. For the safety of our students and staff, MEHP will hold minimal visitors/volunteers in the building during school hours for the 2021-2022 school year.

Individuals who come onto school property or who contact employees on school business are expected to behave accordingly. Specifically, actions that are prohibited include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Cursing and use of obscenities.
- ❖ Disrupting or threatening to disrupt school or office operations.
- ❖ Acting in an unsafe manner that could threaten the health or safety of others.
- ❖ Verbal or written statements or gestures indicating an intent to harm an individual or property.
- ❖ Physical attacks intended to harm an individual or substantially damage property or the school.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

MEHP is committed to engaging parents as partners to be lead participants in their child's academic and social development and be involved in the school's operations and governance.

- ❖ Families are encouraged to support their child academically by engaging in planned classroom events and activities.
- ❖ As part of the enrollment guidelines, parents and/or guardians are required to attend registration, transition meetings, conferences, STEM night and all other parent meetings scheduled by MEHP.
- ❖ Failure to meet MEHP family and community engagement expectations may result in student not being allowed to attend MEHP the next academic school year.

Medications / Immunizations / Health Survey

MEDICATIONS

Parents must bring prescription to the clinic upon their arrival so that it can be stored safely. A medication authorization form must be completed and on file in the main office.

Prescription medicines must be in the original container accompanied by a completed prescription form from your physician indicating the time it is to be administered, permission to dispense the the clinic.

Parents/Guardians must administer over the counter medications. Please provide the school office or teacher with date/time if you plan to administer over the counter medication while your child is at school or contact the clinic if medication needs to be administered. Students and/or teachers cannot administer prescription or over the counter medications. Students in possession of over the counter or prescription medication will be subject to disciplinary consequences and parents will be contacted.

SCHOOL PHYSICIAN

MEHP has a physician on site daily that may treat students for minor illnesses and/or make referrals if needed. Parents must complete the permission form for their child to visit the physician.

ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS

Parents/ guardians are asked to keep their child at home if:

- ❖ His/her temperature is 99.9 degrees or above.
- ❖ There is any vomiting or diarrhea.
- ❖ He/she tests positively for strep throat.
 - Students must stay home for 24 hours after being given an injection or started on oral medicine. Notify the school if your child is diagnosed with strep throat.
- ❖ He/she has a contagious illness (i.e., pink eye, ringworm, rash etc.).

If your son/daughter has any of these symptoms, please do not send her to school for at least a 24-hour period after the symptom(s) have been absent -- even if your child says he/she would like to return to school. Students must also remain home 24 hours after being given an injection or starting oral medication. Students with the above symptoms will be sent home.

Students who are absent three (3) or more consecutive days must have a written doctor's excuse upon returning to school.

ILLNESS DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Students who become ill and need medical assistance during school hours will be sent to the clinic. Front office personnel will call the student's parent and they must be picked up within two (2) hours if deemed necessary.

UNIVERSAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Students are expected to follow the universal emergency procedures during drills and actual emergencies. If a student refuses to comply with teachers and staff, he/she parents will be contacted for assistance or student will have disciplinary consequences.

ELEVATOR USAGE

Students are expected to always use the stairs. Usage of the elevator and lift is reserved for students with a written medical excuse issued by a physician. Students caught using the elevator without proper permission will face disciplinary actions, including suspension.

IMMUNIZATIONS

All students must have updated shot records on file to complete the registration and admission process. Students can receive the immunizations by their doctor or at the health department. Religious reason is exempted with the proper documents provided by parents/guardians.

HEALTH SURVEY

The school may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

The school will maintain an accurate record of all requests to disclose information from or to permit access to a student's education records. Such records should include: What information and access were requested, and whether the information or access was provided; The name of the person or agency that makes the request; The interest the person or agency has in the information; and the date the person or agency makes the request.

The need to maintain confidentiality implies that records should be stored in a safe and secure location. Student records are kept in a locked file cabinet or another location with equivalent security, such as password-protected electronic information system.

“Personal health is related to self-control and to the worship of life in all its natural beauty; self-control bringing with it happiness, renewed youth, and long life.” —Maria Montessori

Photography / Video / Social Media

The following rules apply to students, parents, and their guests. These rules apply to any forms of media, including but not limited to photographs, videos, captions, texts, social media programs, third-party websites, or other online forum.

- ❖ At school sponsored events, do not take any media of other children as the main subject without express content of the other children’s parents. Respect and honor requests from other parents or children to remove or censor media that include other people’s children and have been made publicly available.
- ❖ It is forbidden to digitally share or post any media that include the images of other students without the express consent of the other children’s parents. Consensual media should only be for personal use, such as recording important events and sharing privately among family and close friends. Media used outside of the context to which the depicted individual originally consented, is considered non-consensual and a prohibited use.
- ❖ All media must follow the school’s harassment policy. Any media made, used, or shared with the intent to or has the effect to harass, sexually harass, or embarrass another individual is also considered non-consensual and a prohibited use, regardless of whether that media was created on school grounds or at a school- sponsored event.
- ❖ No media should be made in any facilities considered “private,” where a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy such as a bathroom or depicting any area on an individual’s body considered private. If it is reported that a student has media of a private nature on his or her electronic device, the police will be contacted, and the phone will be surrendered to the police for further investigations. School administrators are not permitted to look at media of this nature on students’ devices.
- ❖ Media on private social media accounts that depict the school, faculty, or other students in a defamatory manner are prohibited.
- ❖ Any media shared on social media or otherwise that have the tendency to disrupt regular school activities are prohibited, regardless of whether that media was created on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event.
- ❖ Students should at no time be involved in texting during the school day. Students involved in texting at school face a consequence according to the code of conduct and disciplinary guides.
- ❖ Any prohibited use of media will be subject to the student disciplinary policy, up to and including expulsion and/or legal action.
- ❖ All school community members are advised in general to use good judgment when making photos or videos outside of school hours and off school property. As a general reminder, anything put on the internet should be considered permanent.
- ❖ Be aware that children are vulnerable, and by making media of them available to the public, the children may be put inadvertently at risk.

- ❖ Parents should inform family members and guests invited to school events of these guidelines. The school also encourages all parents and families to exercise good judgment when making photographs, images, or videos outside of school hours and away from school property. All parties are strongly encouraged to monitor the privacy settings on their own social media and to apply the settings that provide the most privacy possible to their accounts.

Please note that student photos, etc., used in official school publications are covered by separate guidelines and will be handled with permission.

Parent Concerns Process

MEHP considers parent and community support and input vital to school accountability and success. If a MEHP parent or other community member has a concern, they should use the following procedure.

First, directly contact the relevant school faculty or staff member: Please communicate any concerns or complaints directly to the teacher or staff member with whom you have a concern. Please assume that the person may not know about your concern until you have clearly conveyed it.

Second, escalate your concern to relevant leaders: If the individual staff member with which you communicated was unable to resolve your concern, please contact the principal or director of the school, via email. Most concerns can be resolved at the school level.

Third, if school leaders are unable to resolve your concern, contact our Board of Trustees: Montessori Elementary at Highland Park is governed by a nonprofit Board of Trustees, and is subject to oversight by its authorizer. Please note that the Board will generally not hear grievances that have not first been channeled through school staff.

Fourth, contact the Hamilton County District (HCD). If a parent has a concern that a school has violated the law, applicable district policy, a charter contract or student safety responsibilities, and parents' efforts to solve the problem directly with school leadership and board of trustees fails to satisfactorily address a parent's concern, then the parent may appeal to the HCD for assistance resolving the issue. Please note that, for most concerns, the HCD does not have authority to overturn the decisions of charter school boards regarding student services and staff. If warranted, the sole actions that the HCD has the authority to take beyond informing and influencing a charter operator to resolve an inadequately addressed Tennessee statute-defined violation on its own are to modify the expansion or replication of a school or revoke the charter.

Where a concern involves a criminal violation of the law (e.g., a parent believes that his or her child has been physically abused by a school employee or another student), the parent should immediately contact the local police department and the TN Department of Children's Services (DCS). School and district personnel who suspect student abuse are required to notify DCS and shall immediately do so upon notification or substantiated suspicion that a student has been abused.

APPENDIX 1

BUS POLICY

Students should plan to arrive approximately ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time of their bus. The drivers strive to stay on schedule however, traffic and/or weather conditions can affect their actual arrival time at your stop.

Students shall be at the bus stop at the scheduled time. The bus schedule does not allow additional time to wait for those students who are tardy. Students shall stand a safe distance from the flow of traffic at the bus stop and wait until the bus door is open before moving toward the bus. They shall not play on highways or streets.

While the bus is loading or unloading, students shall enter or leave the bus promptly and in an orderly manner.

Students shall conduct themselves in such a manner that they will not disturb other riders on the bus or distract the attention of the bus driver. The following behavior is prohibited during bus rides:

- ❖ Standing while the bus is in motion
- ❖ Throwing items around the bus
- ❖ Physical aggression towards another person

The use of abusive or obscene language is strictly forbidden. Students are not permitted to bring knives or sharp objects of any kind, firearms, pepper spray or mace, tasers, blankets, pillows, pets or other living animals on the bus.

Students shall not tamper with any of the safety devices such as door latches and fire extinguishers.

Students shall not shout or make gestures toward anyone outside the bus. Students shall not extend their hands, arms, head, or any other part of their body through the window.

Students shall not deface or litter the bus. They shall not write on the bus, damage seats, or throw paper, food or other objects on the floor of the bus, nor from the bus. Unnecessary abuse of the school bus by a pupil, e.g., cut seats, broken glass, etc., will result in that pupil becoming ineligible for transportation. Said pupil shall become eligible again only when payment is made for damages and assurances given that the abuse will not recur.

Food or drinks may not be consumed on the bus, and smoking is not permitted.

Students shall keep aisles of the bus clear in order to admit passage in the aisle.

Students shall not ask the driver to let them off the bus at any other place except their regular stop.

Students who must cross the road or highway to enter the bus are encouraged to wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the driver has signaled them to cross in front of the bus.

Students who must cross the road after leaving the bus in the afternoon shall go to a point on the shoulder of the road ten feet in front of the bus and cross the road only after the driver has signaled them to cross.

Students will sit in their assigned seats for the duration of the trip. For safety purposes, aisles or emergency exits shall not be blocked.

APPENDIX 2

TN STATE DEPT OF EDUCATION DISCIPLINE CODE 49-6-3401. Suspension of students — Expulsion of students.

a) Any principal, principal-teacher or assistant principal of any public school in this state is authorized to suspend a pupil from attendance at the school, including its sponsored activities, or from riding a school bus, for good and sufficient reasons.

Good and sufficient reasons for suspension include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Willful and persistent violation of the rules of the school or truancy
- ❖ Immoral or disreputable conduct or vulgar or profane language
- ❖ Violence or threatened violence against the person of any personnel attending or assigned to any public school
- ❖ Willful or malicious damage to real or personal property of the school, or the property of any person attending or assigned to the school
- ❖ Inciting, advising or counseling of others to engage in any of the acts enumerated in subdivisions (a)(1)-(4)
- ❖ Marking, defacing or destroying school property
- ❖ Possession of a pistol, gun or firearm on school property
- ❖ Possession of a knife and other weapons, as defined in § 39-17-1301 on school property
- ❖ Assaulting a principal or teacher with vulgar, obscene or threatening language · (10) Unlawful use or possession of barbitol or legend drugs, as defined in § 53- 10-101
- ❖ Two (2) or more students initiating a physical attack on an individual student on school property or at a school activity, including travel to and from school
- ❖ Making a threat, including a false report, to use a bomb, dynamite, any other deadly explosive or destructive device, including chemical weapons, on school
- ❖ property or at a school sponsored event
- ❖ Any other conduct prejudicial to good order or discipline in any public school
- ❖ Off-campus criminal behavior that results in the student being legally charged with a felony and the student's continued presence in school poses a danger to persons or property or disrupts the educational process

b) (1) Any principal, principal-teacher or assistant principal may suspend any pupil from attendance at a specific class, classes or school-sponsored activity without

suspending the pupil from attendance at school pursuant to an in-school suspension policy adopted by the local board of education. Good and sufficient reasons for in-school suspension include, but are not limited to, behavior:

- ❖ That adversely affects the safety and well-being of other pupils
- ❖ That disrupts a class or school sponsored activity
- ❖ Prejudicial to good order and discipline occurring in class, during school sponsored activities or on the school campus

b) (2) In-school suspension policies shall provide that pupil given an in-school suspension in excess of one (1) day from classes shall attend either special classes attended only by students guilty of misconduct or be placed in an isolated area appropriate for study. Students given in-school suspension shall be required to complete academic requirements.

c) (1) Except in an emergency, no principal, principal-teacher or assistant principal shall suspend any student until that student has been advised of the nature of the student's misconduct, questioned about it and allowed to give an explanation.

(2) Upon suspension of any student other than for in-school suspension of one (1) day or less, the principal shall, within twenty-four (24) hours, notify the parent or guardian and the principal of schools or the principal of schools' designee of:

- ❖ The suspension, which shall be for a period of no more than ten (10) days · The cause for the suspension
- ❖ The conditions for readmission, which may include, at the request of either party, a meeting of the parent or guardian, student and principal. (3) If the suspension is for more than five (5) days, the

principal shall develop and implement a plan for improving the behavior, which shall be made available for review by the principal of schools upon request.

(4)(A) If, at the time of the suspension, the principal, principal-teacher or assistant principal determines that an offense has been committed that would justify a suspension for more than ten (10) days, the person may suspend a student unconditionally for a specified period or upon such terms and conditions as are deemed reasonable.

(B) The principal, principal-teacher or assistant principal shall immediately give written or actual notice to the parent or guardian and the student of the right to appeal the decision to suspend for more than ten (10) days. All appeals must be filed, orally or in writing, within five (5) days after receipt of the notice and may be filed by the parent or guardian, the student or any person holding a teaching license who is employed by the school system if requested by the student.

(C) The appeal from this decision shall be to the board of education or to a disciplinary hearing authority appointed by the board. The disciplinary hearing authority, if appointed, shall consist of at least one (1) licensed employee of the LEA, but no more than the number of members of the local board.

(D) The hearing shall be held no later than ten (10) days after the beginning of the suspension. The local board of education or the disciplinary hearing authority shall give written notice of the time and place of the hearing to the parent or guardian, the student and the school official designated in subdivision (c)(4)(A) who ordered the suspension. Notice shall also be given to the LEA employee referred to in subdivision (c)(4)(B) who requests a hearing on behalf of a suspended student.

(5) After the hearing, the board of education or the disciplinary hearing authority may affirm the decision of the principal, order removal of the suspension unconditionally or upon such terms and conditions as it deems reasonable, assign the student to an alternative program or night school or suspend the student for a specified period.

(6) If the decision is determined by a disciplinary hearing authority, a written record of the proceedings, including a summary of the facts and the reasons supporting the decision, shall be made by the disciplinary hearing authority. The student, principal, principal-teacher or assistant principal may, within five (5) days of the decision, request review by the board of education; provided, that local school board policy may require an appeal to the principal of schools prior to a request for review to the board. Absent a timely appeal, the decision shall be final. The board of education, based upon a review of the record, may grant or deny a request for a board hearing and may affirm or overturn the decision of the hearing authority with or without a hearing before the board; provided, that the board may not impose a more severe penalty than that imposed by the hearing authority without first providing an opportunity for a hearing before the board. If the board conducts a hearing as a result of a request for review by a student, principal, principal-teacher or assistant principal, then, notwithstanding any provision of the open meetings laws compiled in title 8, chapter 44, or other law to the contrary, the hearing shall be closed to the public, unless the student or student's parent or guardian requests in writing within five (5) days after receipt of written notice of the hearing that the hearing be conducted as an open meeting. If the board conducts a hearing as a result of a request for review by a student, principal, principal-teacher, or assistant principal that is closed to the public, then the board shall not conduct any business, discuss any subject or take a vote on any matter other than the appeal to be heard. Nothing in this subdivision (c)(6) shall act to exclude the department of children's services from the disciplinary hearings when the department is exercising its obligations under § 37-1-140.

The action of the board of education shall be final.

(d) In the event the suspension occurs during the last ten (10) days of any term or semester, the pupil may be permitted to take final examinations or submit required work that is necessary to complete the course of instruction for that semester, subject to the action of the principal, or the final action of the board of education upon any appeal from an order of a principal continuing a suspension.

(e) Students under in-school suspension shall be recorded as constituting a part of the public-school attendance in the same manner as students who attend regular classes.

(f) Nothing in this title shall require an LEA to enroll a student who is under suspension or expelled in an LEA either in Tennessee or another state. The principal of schools for the school system in which the suspended student requests enrollment shall make a recommendation to the local board of education to approve or deny the request. The recommendation shall occur only after investigation of the facts surrounding the suspension from the former school system. If the recommendation is to deny admission and if the local board approves

the principal of schools' recommendation, the principal of schools shall, on behalf of the board of education, notify the commissioner of the decision. Nothing in this subsection (f) shall affect children in state custody or their enrollment in any LEA. Any LEA that accepts enrollment of a student from another LEA may dismiss the student if it is determined subsequent to enrollment that the student had been suspended or expelled by the other LEA. (g) Notwithstanding this section or any other law to the contrary, a pupil determined to have brought to school or to be in unauthorized possession on school property of a firearm, as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921, shall be expelled for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year, except that the Principal may modify this expulsion on a case-by-case basis. In addition to the other provisions of this part, a student committing battery upon any teacher, principal, administrator, any other employee of an LEA or school resource officer, or unlawfully possessing any drug including any controlled substance, as defined in §§ 39-17-403 through 39-17-415, or legend drug, as defined by § 53-10-101, shall be expelled for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year, except that the Principal may modify this expulsion on a case-by-case basis. For purposes of this subsection (g), "expelled" means removed from the pupil's regular school program at the location where the violation occurred or removed from school attendance altogether, as determined by the school official. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the assignment of such students to an alternative school. Disciplinary policies and procedures for all other student offenses, including terms of suspensions and expulsions, shall be determined by local board of education policy.

(h) The commissioner of education shall report on a semi-annual basis to the select oversight committee on education and the education committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives regarding disciplinary actions in Tennessee schools. The reports shall include the reason for the disciplinary action, the number of such students suspended or expelled and the number of such students who have been placed in an alternative educational setting. Data shall be sorted by school as well as by various demographic factors, including grade, race and sex.

Handbook Acknowledgement

As a school, MEHP commits to offer a rich, rigorous, personalized learning in a caring community. We give students meaningful work so that they can develop excellence. We build relationships with families, and communicate closely, including frequently updating you about their growth and development, asking questions and responding promptly to yours.

As parent/guardian, I commit to the following on my child's behalf, for them to prosper:

1. Attend school daily, on time, ready to learn after a good night's sleep:
 - ❖ Doors open 7:30 for breakfast; arrive by 7:45 am for breakfast.
 - ❖ No late drop offs after 8:15 without a doctor's note.
 - ❖ No early pickups after 2:30.
 - ❖ Have transportation home by 3:15 daily.
 - ❖ Provide a written excuse within three (3) days of returning to school if my child as an excused absence. Unexcused absence/tardy: appear on report cards; may require a conference; adversely affect a child's education; may be referred to the truancy officer or department of children's services for educational neglect.
2. Follow the dress code:
 - ❖ MEHP logo shirt; solid navy or khaki color bottoms. See full dress code for details.
 - ❖ All children must have a second pair of indoor shoes that stay at school.
 - ❖ PreK and Kindergarten must have a change of clothes to stay at school in case of an accident.
 - ❖ Student cell phones must be turned off and kept in his/her bag or by the teacher.
3. Communicate openly with school. Review communications and respond as needed.
4. Participate in required conferences. Participate in other school events to the best of your ability.
5. Read with my child daily & check with them on completing homework as assigned, which is reflected on report cards.
6. Respect our faculty and take responsibility for our classrooms and school environment.
7. If called about an urgent behavior issue, a caring adult in my child's life will come to the school promptly, to help my child calm down, or bring the child home if necessary.

If someone does not come to school when called for a behavioral emergency, the child may be suspended, and/or referred to public authorities. By signing, I agree to the statements above, and acknowledge that I have received the Family Handbook and will familiarize myself with its contents. I understand that the school policies are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school at any time.

Student's Name

Parent's Signature

Date