

Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024



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INTRODUCTION

This entire Handbook is subject to the laws of the United States and Alaska and policies of the local Borough School District and is subject to any School Board policy changes.

This Student Handbook is intended to be a general guide for parents and students. It does not contain the details of each school's regulations. It should be understood that no one document can contain policies to cover every single situation that can occur in a public school setting. The unit school principal or teaching principal has the responsibility to make decisions and develop each school's detailed policy implementation. Any question that may arise as this document is read should be referred to the unit administrator for clarification and/or answers.

NOTE: It shall be the policy of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District to provide equal educational opportunity to all persons, to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, marital status, parenthood, age, national origin, or disability, and to promote the full realization of equal educational opportunity in each department, division, and school unit in the District.

For more information, please contact the Office of Instruction at 746-9212, your child's principal, or the School District web site: www.matsuk12.us.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ADVERTISING IN SCHOOLS: Advertising that has a profit motive shall be prohibited in the Borough Schools.

ATTENDANCE: Alaska Law provides: *"Unless excepted by law, every child between seven and 16 years of age shall attend school at the public school in the district in which the child resides during each school term. Every parent, guardian, or other person having responsibility for or control of a child between 6 and 16 years of age shall insure that the child is not absent from attendance."* (AS 14.30.010. AS = Alaska Statute). There are limited exceptions specified in this law.

Our School District believes there is a positive correlation between class attendance and academic achievement. Students with good attendance habits generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more, and are more easily employable after leaving school. The responsibility for regular attendance lies with the parent and the student. Absences for the following reasons will be considered acceptable:

1. Illness, doctor or dental appointment
2. School-scheduled activities
3. Pre-arranged absences for which administrative approval has been received, e.g., religious holidays, trip.

Students will not be counted absent if the bus does not run. Work missed because of an absence should be made up. Exceptional cases will be reviewed on an individual basis by the administrator. A note from the parent or guardian explaining the tardiness or absence is required. For more information, please refer to School Board policy.

ATTENDANCE BOUNDARIES: Students who reside within District boundaries may apply for enrollment in any District school where space is available. The District will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical, or mental disability, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, or parenthood in making a boundary exemption decision. Students shall attend school in their attendance area unless otherwise authorized by the Superintendent or designee. The District is not responsible for providing transportation for students living outside the school's attendance area.

When considering changes to school attendance boundaries, the Superintendent shall take into account racial and ethnic balance, educational programs, school capacities, geographic features, student safety, and transportation considerations.

Demographic changes may result in overcrowded schools or in declining enrollment. Fiscal limitations may prevent the District from opening new schools or maintaining facilities that are unused. Changes in student population cannot always be remedied by a change in school attendance boundaries. The Board shall regularly review school and District enrollments and projected enrollments and will make every effort to ensure that students will be able to attend neighborhood schools. The Board shall hold a public hearing to secure community input before approving any boundary change. State approval shall be obtained as required by law.

The Chief School Administrator/Superintendent or designee may place some students in a school outside of their attendance area in order to alleviate overcrowding. These students shall be provided transportation to a school with adequate space. When possible, siblings will be allowed to attend the same school.

Boundary exemptions accepted by the end of April will be considered for staffing purposes for the following school year. Boundary exemptions honored after this deadline may not be considered for additional staffing.

Boundary exemptions must be applied for annually. A boundary exemption may be revoked due to a student's lack of attendance.

CAMPAIGNS OR ACTIVITIES FOR RAISING MONEY FOR STUDENTS: The purpose of fundraising projects shall be explained to students and parents and shall benefit students enrolled in the school. All participation shall be voluntary. Elementary school students may not participate in school-related, door-to-door campaigns.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: The School Board recognizes the responsibility of the schools to sponsor an adequate, yet reasonable, program of co-curricular activities and to direct those activities along wholesome and worthwhile lines.

All new programs must follow established procedures to be approved by the School Board. The number and variety of activities will depend on available funds from the annual School District Budget.

COLD WEATHER RECESS: Because weather conditions vary greatly between schools, cold weather policy must originate at the individual school level.

Regular exposure to fresh air and vigorous exercise is essential to a child's physical well-being. Daily periods of outdoor activity are strongly recommended. Inclement weather is an obvious deterrent to maintenance of a daily schedule. As general criteria, the District recommends:

Temperature down to -10°F: regularly scheduled recesses

Temperature below -10°F: shortened and/or canceled recesses at the discretion of the principal or designee

As the Matanuska-Susitna Borough experiences unusual conditions regarding rain and wind, and when these conditions are prevalent, the principal or designee will carefully monitor weather conditions and limit or cancel outdoor recess with discretion.

DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS: No staff member may permit an individual student to leave the school prior to the regular time of dismissal except by permission of the building administrator.

No student shall be permitted to leave school prior to the regular time of dismissal at the request of or in the company of anyone other than a school employee, police officer, court officials or the parent or guardian of the child, unless the permission of the parent or guardian has first been secured. Phone requests for dismissal may be checked to determine the validity of the call. If the police or court officials request the dismissal of a student during school hours, parents should be notified as quickly as possible.

Students should not be excused from school to attend private classes or special functions of any kind except by special permission of the building administrator, and only in cases where such attendance will not interfere with the work of the school.

DRUG FREE SCHOOLS: Because the use of alcohol and other drugs adversely affects a student's ability to achieve academic success, is physically and emotionally harmful, and has serious social and legal consequences, the School Board intends to keep District schools free of alcohol and other drugs.

Alcohol, like any other controlled substance, is illegal for use by minors. The Board desires that every effort be made to reduce the chances that our students will begin or continue the use of alcohol and other drugs. The Superintendent or designee shall develop a comprehensive prevention program that includes instruction, intervention, recovering student support, and enforcement/discipline. The Superintendent or designee shall clearly communicate to students, staff and parents/ guardians all Board policies, regulations, procedures and school rules related to this prevention program.

Recognizing that keeping schools free of alcohol and other drugs is a concern common to the district and community, the Board supports cooperation among schools, parents/guardians, law enforcement and other appropriate community organizations involved in preventing alcohol and other drug abuse.

To obtain the widest possible input and support for district policies and programs, the Board may appoint a districtwide school-community advisory committee to make recommendations related to the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse.

ELIGIBILITY OF STUDENTS: The public schools of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough shall be free and open to all students who are residents of the Borough.

Kindergarten-A child who is five (5) years of age or who will become five (5) years of age on or before September 1, following the beginning of the school year, may enter a public school Kindergarten.

First Grade-A child who is six (6) years of age or who will become six (6) years of age on or before September 1, following the beginning of the school year, is a child of school age. (AS 14.03.070).

District policy regarding early entrance testing of a child is as follows:

1. The child must be five (5) years of age before October 1 of the school year in which the child is being considered for early entry to Kindergarten.
2. The child must be six (6) years of age before October 1 of the school year in which the child is being considered for early entry to first grade. For specific information, contact the Office of Instruction at 746-9212.

Additionally, a person who is under the age of 20 and has not completed 12th grade is of school age. (AS 14.03.070).

EXTRACURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (6145 BP/6145 AR):

The School Board recognizes that extracurricular and co-curricular activities enrich the educational and social development and experiences of students and shall annually adopt a plan for student participation in extra/co-curricular activities which does not

compromise the integrity and purpose of the educational program. Participation in extracurricular and co-curricular activities is a privilege. The students are ambassadors of our schools in these competitions therefore academic eligibility, good grades, and consistent attendance is the rule not the exception.

The District shall publish a coaches' and sponsors' (club) handbook, which contains information about responsibilities, programs, sportsmanship, insurance, fees, and procedures. Individual elementary and secondary school handbooks may contain additional information.

1. Academic Eligibility Requirements for Practice and Participation:

- a. All District high school student athletes may practice but will not be allowed to play or travel while academically ineligible. Students in the process of obtaining eligibility through the Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA) waiver process may tryout and practice pending the outcome of the waiver request.
- b. To be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities, all second semester freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors who are not on track to graduate must have passed at least five (5) semester units of credit, or the equivalent, toward graduation, during the previous semester. At the end of each quarter, all students must have a 2.0 grade point average and comply with all other minimum ASAA requirements. Seniors who are on track to graduate must successfully have completed five (5) courses or four (4) courses the previous spring for early fall sports.
- c. Second semester seniors who are on track to graduate must be enrolled in a minimum of four (4) semester units of credit toward graduation during the previous semester, or equivalent, with a 2.0 GPA.
- d. All courses needed for eligibility need to specifically lead to meeting MSBSD graduation requirement. Only one Pass/Fail course of Student Aide is allowed each semester or equivalent for Juniors and Seniors in good academic standing only. Community Service credits are not acceptable.
- e. For the purpose of this section, academic deficiencies may be made up through successful completion of correspondence courses or summer school.
- f. The eligibility period will begin on or before the sixth working day after the end of the previous quarter (5121a AR). Each school site will determine its own specific eligibility date within that guideline. The grades must be posted on the computerized report card by that date.
- g. Students making up grades from 2nd semester during the summer must have an official record of the final grade and credit prior to the first academic contact day. If a student fails to have summer work completed, graded, recorded, and confirmed by the school administrator prior to the first academic contact day, then the student will be ineligible to practice/participate in activities during the first academic quarter or the equivalent.
- h. Students making up a credit (to meet the requirement of 6145.1b BP) from 2nd semester during the summer must have an official record of the final grade and credit prior to the first academic contact day. If a student fails to have summer work completed, graded, recorded and confirmed by the school administrator by the first academic contact day, the student will be ineligible to practice/participate in activities during the first academic quarter or the equivalent.
- i. A grade of incomplete is considered as not passing until the incomplete is changed on the official school records.
- j. Private school, out of district correspondence, Mat-Su Central School, and non-

- traditional school students must meet the same time frame as regular students.
- k. Athletes must adhere to the ASAA Citizenship Rule and Controlled Substance, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy (Bylaw Article 12, Section 8).
 - l. An athlete must meet the above requirements to be considered eligible. All eligible athlete names must be on the master eligibility list that is sent in to ASAA by the school.

2. Eligibility Requirements - Maximum Participation

- a. No Student enrolled in a four-year high school may participate in more than four (4) seasons in any specific interscholastic activity. No student enrolled in a three (3) year high school may participate in more than three (3) seasons in any specific interscholastic activity.
- b. Participation in a single interscholastic contest shall be considered as one (1) season of participation in that activity.
- c. Each student will have eight (8) consecutive semesters of eligibility after they begin grade nine. (No fifth-year seniors will be permitted without approval from ASAA).
- d. A student who becomes nineteen (19) years of age on or before August 1 shall be ineligible for interscholastic competition.
- e. No student shall be allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activities after earning a high school diploma or its equivalent.

3. Students Retained

- a. Loss of eligibility: A student held back in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade for athletic purposes shall lose his/her fourth year of high school eligibility.
- b. Loss of third and fourth years: A student held back for two years in the sixth, seventh, or eighth grade for athletic purposes shall lose both his/her third and fourth years of eligibility after entering the ninth grade.

4. Exchange Students

District students involved in exchange/travel programs are eligible for interscholastic sports participation upon return to their home school when a request for waiver of the Semester Credit Rule is made to the Mat-Su School District and the Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA) and waived by both the Superintendent/Chief School Administrator, or designee, and the Executive Director of ASAA. Such students must otherwise be eligible by all other rules, i.e., not graduated from a secondary school, not over age, and must have passed four subjects the last semester in attendance in their Alaska high school.

5. Waivers of Eligibility

A student who has been determined to be ineligible to participate in extracurricular and co-curricular activities under one or more of the eligibility rules may request a waiver.

- a. Request Procedures: A request for a waiver must be directed by the student to the school's building administrator. If the building administrator, upon review of the waiver request, finds that the request is appropriate, the building administrator shall forward the request to the Superintendent/ Chief School Administrator or designee, along with a memorandum explaining their reasons why the administrator believes the waiver request should be granted. If a building administrator finds that a wavier is not appropriate the request will not be submitted to the Superintendent/Chief School Administrator's office.

- b. Review by the Superintendent/Chief School Administrator: Upon receipt of the waiver request, the Superintendent/Chief School Administrator, or designee, shall review the waiver request to determine whether any additional information is necessary. If additional information is necessary, the Superintendent, or designee, shall request the building administrator to supply it. The Superintendent/Chief School Administrator, or designee, shall render the decision as expeditiously as possible after receiving the waiver request and any additional requested information.
- c. Guidelines for Consideration: To assist students and schools to decide whether to request a waiver in specific circumstances, the following apply:
 - 1. Except in unusual circumstances and for good cause shown, requests for waivers of standards of eligibility involving semesters of enrollment will not be granted.
 - 2. The Superintendent/Chief School Administrator will not grant eligibility in any case in which the asserted hardship is the sole result of knowing conduct by the student or his or her parents or guardian which had the effect of causing the hardship.
 - 3. Ignorance of any standard is not sufficient reason for waiving a standard.
 - 4. Waiver requests are subject to ASAA rules, policies, and procedures. Under certain circumstances, waiver requests must also be submitted to ASAA for approval.

Please see [6183 BP/6183 AR](#) for new policies on Homeschool Law-Alternative Education Programs.

EMERGENCY DRILLS: Drills will be held monthly during the year. Teachers will announce and post directions for students to follow regarding fire and earthquake drills. All alarms indicate possible fires or other emergencies, and instructions should be strictly obeyed when an alarm sounds.

FIELD TRIPS: The building administrator must approve in advance any excursions or field trips which occur as part of class instruction. If transportation is required, written approval of the parent must be secured in advance of the trip.

IDENTIFICATION CARDS: Identification cards for students increase the ability of school staff to identify individuals who do not belong in the school building and make the facility safer for all who use it. (District Issued Student Identification, [5142.01 BP](#))

During normal school hours while on school property and when attending school or District activities, middle and high school students are required to be in possession their official Matanuska Susitna Borough School District identification card.

The identification card is the property of the District. The student identification card must be relinquished to any staff member or bus driver upon request. If a student withdraws from the District, the identification badge is to be returned to his or her school principal's office.

One (1) identification card will be issued to each person. Due to material costs, all staff and students will be charged \$5.00 for each replacement card. This charge will be used to defray the expenses for materials and creating a second card. This charge is to be paid to the school office.

If a card is lost, stolen, or broken, a temporary identification form will be issued by the student's school. The temporary identification form is valid until a replacement is issued. Failure to carry a permanent or temporary identification card may result in student discipline.

IMMUNIZATION AND HEALTH EXAMINATION OF STUDENTS: Current immunizations are required by Alaska State Regulations (4 AAC 06.055) in order for students to be enrolled in school. A child shall be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis, measles, mumps, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and rubella, except rubella is not required in children 12 years of age or older. Varicella is required for students up through 6th grade. Preschool students also require HIB. An exemption may be obtained under three specific circumstances:

Immunity: Regulations require documentation if a child is not to receive vaccines due to immunity. Documentation must be signed by an Alaska-licensed M.S., D.O., A.N.P., or P.A. stating the child is immune.

Medical Exemption: The regulations allow a statement signed by an Alaska-licensed M.S., D.O., A.N.P., or P.A. stating that immunizations would, in that individual's professional opinion, be injurious to the health of the child or members of the child's family or household.

Religious Exemption: A parent or guardian must sign a form affirming that immunization conflicts with tenets and practices of the church or religious denomination of which the student is a member. The form, with additional information regarding exemption requirements, is available in the State of Alaska Child Care & School Immunization Requirements Packet (www.epi.alaska.gov/immunize). Note: This form must be notarized and submitted annually.

Any child who lacks proof of immunization or a valid exemption will be excluded from school. Children who have begun the required series and are in the "waiting period" before additional doses can be given will be allowed to remain in attendance until the next dose is due.

In excusing students from attending school or from any curricular activity because of illness or physical disability, school authorities shall recognize only a medical doctor licensed in the State of Alaska, a school nurse, a representative of the Alaska Department of Health or local Health Office, or a chiropractor licensed in the State of Alaska.

LOCKERS: A locker or other container provided by the school or District may be searched and examined, with the permission of the principal, to determine compliance with school and District regulations, and local, state, and federal laws. (AS 14.03.105)

LOST AND FOUND: All schools maintain a lost and found service. Students may inquire about these items through the office at each school. Items not claimed will be donated to appropriate agencies.

LUNCH CHARGES (3550 AR): Students who do not qualify under the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Income Eligibility Guidelines or students whose family has not yet completed an income eligibility application, the following circumstances may apply:

If a student does not have money in their account or in-hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of service, the District will:

- Provide a meal or a la carte options to any student who requests it.
- Charge all meals to the student's account regardless of whether or not there are sufficient funds to cover the charge.
- Not require that the student return the product or throw it away.
- Not require that a student complete chores or other work to pay for meals, unless all other students complete similar chores or work regardless of whether money is owed for meals.

If a student's cafeteria account balance is less than \$0, the District will:

- Send a low balance notice to the student's parent or guardian on a weekly basis.
- Determine if the student has been identified as being eligible for free or reduced-price lunches under the USDA's current Income Eligibility Guidelines.
- If the student has not been identified as being eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, the school shall make at least two attempts to contact the student's parent or guardian to have them fill out an application to determine if the student is eligible for free or reduced price meals under the USDA's Income Eligibility Guidelines.
- If the student is not eligible for free or reduced-price meals or the parent or guardian does not fill out an application, the school shall make reasonable efforts to contact the parent or guardian and to offer assistance filling out an application, if appropriate.

All attempts should be made to settle delinquent meal charges within 30 days.

MASS NOTIFICATION: A Mass Notification system enables School District administrators to record, schedule, send and track personalized voice, email, and text messages within minutes to thousands of families in the Mat-Su Borough School District. These messages may be received by parents for three primary reasons: emergency communication (to reach parents in an emergency situation), community outreach (e.g., reminders of upcoming school events, alerts regarding last-minute changes to schedules, information about school initiatives), and student attendance (notification of a child's absence from school).

NON-DISCRIMINATION (5145.03 BP): District programs and activities shall be free from discrimination with respect to sex, race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, marital or parental status, and physical or mental disability. The School Board shall ensure equal opportunities for all students in admission and access to academic courses, guidance and counseling programs, athletic programs, testing procedures, vocational education, and other activities.

Separate arrangements may be made for students according to sex during human sexuality programs and physical education activities involving bodily contact. (AS 14.18.050)

School staff and volunteers must be especially careful to guard against unconscious sex discrimination and stereotyping in instruction, guidance, and supervision.

NON-HARASSMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION REGULATIONS (5145.07 BP): The School Board recognizes that sexual harassment can cause embarrassment, feelings of powerlessness, loss of self-confidence, reduced ability to perform schoolwork, and increased absenteeism or tardiness.

To promote an environment free of sexual harassment, the principal or designee shall take appropriate actions such as removing vulgar or offending graffiti, establishing site rules, and providing staff in service or student instruction and counseling. Teachers shall discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and shall assure them that they need not endure any form of sexual harassment.

The Board shall not tolerate the sexual harassment of any student by any other student or any district employee. Any student or employee who is found guilty of sexual harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action.

The Board encourages students or staff to immediately report incidence of sexual harassment to the principal or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall promptly investigate each complaint of sexual harassment in a way that ensures the privacy of all parties concerned. In no case shall the student be required to resolve the complaint directly with the offending person.

Schools will make every effort to notify parents within 24 hours if their student was reported a victim or perpetrator of sexual harassment.

NON-RESIDENT STUDENT TUITION: The tuition rate of non-resident students shall be fixed by the Board on the basis of a school year.

OPEN/CLOSED CAMPUS (5112.05 BP/5112.05 AR): The School Board establishes a "closed campus" at District schools. The requirement to keep students on campus is part of the Board's efforts to maintain a safe school climate and to reduce afternoon absenteeism. Once students arrive at school, they must remain on campus until the end of the school day unless they have brought written authorization from their parents/guardians and received permission from school authorities to leave for a specific purpose. Students who leave campus without such authorization shall be classified as truant and subject to disciplinary action.

The Board finds that school facilities and resources are adequate to serve the lunchtime needs of all of our students. The Board further perceives that a closed campus benefits students by encouraging them to participate in school activities, rather than following other pursuits which may not be in their best interests. The administration shall provide educational, recreational, organizational, and social opportunities for students during the lunch period. Students who have finished eating shall have a quiet place to read or study.

Students participating in Districtwide courses, other credit options, or having an abbreviated course schedule travel on and off the school campus throughout the day. Principals can opt to extend this opportunity as an earned privilege to students making good choices as evidenced by both behavior and grades.

Schools may elect to award open campus privileges to students minimally meeting the following specific criteria:

1. Juniors and seniors only
2. Parent permission required
3. Grade point average of 3.0 or greater the semester prior
4. No marijuana/alcohol/tobacco/drug infractions the previous year
5. No in or out of school suspensions in the previous semester

School principals can revoke open campus privilege for failing to meet the above criteria or other safety related violations. Examples would include, but are not limited to, taking another student off campus who does not have the privilege or repeatedly being tardy returning from off campus.

PARENTVUE: ParentVUE offers parents/guardians online registration and access to student information including attendance, scheduling, discipline, and grades. If parents or guardians encounter problems using ParentVUE, they should contact the District's Call Center at (907) 761-4357 or email parentvue@matsuk12.us for assistance.

PETS/ANIMALS: Animals kept in the classroom may be used in areas which include activities related to interest, handling, experience, enrichment, as a reward for contract fulfillment, in addition to a purely academic subject matter approach and under conditions which must ensure the safety of the children and the well-being of the animal. While animals can be both beneficial and enriching to the curriculum, care must be taken in the handling of any animal. In elementary school, students eat lunch in the classrooms, and 80% of the air is recirculated in all schools throughout the day. Many animals are known carriers of salmonella or psittacosis. State law (18 AAC 31) restricts animals from eating/food establishments. For particular concerns, more information, and/or inspection, please contact the Program Manager for Environmental Sanitation and Food Safety at DEC at (907) 269-7583, or the District Risk Manager.

PROGRESS REPORTS: Progress Reports are sent to parents via the student in the middle of each nine-week period or as needed. This notice is to inform the parent and student of the student's progress.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS CONCERNING THE SCHOOLS: The School Board believes that the quality of the educational program can improve when the District listens to complaints, considers differences of opinion, and resolves disagreements through an established, objective process.

The Board encourages complainants to resolve problems early and informally whenever possible. If a problem remains unresolved, the individual should submit a written, signed formal complaint as early as possible in accordance with appropriate District procedures. District procedures shall be readily accessible to the public.

REPORT CARDS: A report card is a formal notice of student progress which is sent to parents or guardians via the student every nine-week period. This notice informs parents and students of the student's progress and may contain teacher comments. Parents or guardians are encouraged to meet with teachers regarding student progress. The end-of-the-year report card may be mailed to the parent or guardian at the prerogative of the school administrator.

SCHOOL PROPERTY: Students are expected to take good care of school property, which includes textbooks, desks, lockers, and the building in general. Textbooks are furnished by the District, and students must assume full responsibility for their care. Desk storage and student lockers, where available, are the property of the District and remain so throughout the life of the item. Individual desks may be searched when it is reasonable to believe that potentially dangerous objects, contraband, or illegal substances exist.

SECURITY CAMERAS IN SCHOOLS (5143 BP): It is the policy of the Matanuska Susitna Borough School District to create and maintain a safe school and work environment. Security cameras, closed-circuit television systems (CCTV), may be installed in District schools to monitor school property, to assist school administrators in detecting and deterring unacceptable behavior or activities, and to provide an historical record to assist in investigation. Security cameras are used to accomplish three important goals in the District:

1. Deterrence: prevention of crime and student misconduct;
2. Apprehension of those not deterred from the conduct noted immediately prior;
3. To assist in the identification of intruders and of persons endangering the health, well-being, or safety of school community members.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT (5145.07 BP): The School Board recognizes that sexual harassment can cause embarrassment, feelings of powerlessness, loss of self-confidence, reduced ability to perform schoolwork, and increased absenteeism or tardiness. To promote an environment free of sexual harassment, the principal or designee shall take appropriate actions such as removing vulgar or offending graffiti, establishing site rules, and providing staff in-service or student instruction and counseling. Teachers shall discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and shall assure them that they need not endure any form of sexual harassment.

The Board shall not tolerate the sexual harassment of any student by any other student or any District employee. Any student or employee who is found guilty of sexual harassment shall be subject to disciplinary action. The Board encourages students and staff to immediately report incidence of sexual harassment to the principal or designee. The Chief School Administrator or designee shall promptly investigate each complaint of sexual harassment in a way that ensures the privacy of all parties concerned. In no case shall the student be required to resolve the complaint directly with the offending person.

STUDENT DIRECTORY INFORMATION: Directory information refers to a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height, years of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student.

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), military recruiters are given the same access to secondary school students as provided to postsecondary institutions or to prospective employers. School districts are also generally required to provide students' names, addresses, and telephone listings to military recruiters, when requested.

Any parent objecting to the public release of any or all of such information must check the appropriate box in the online registration system when enrolling their students. Additionally, parents may notify the student's school in writing.

STUDENT INJURIES/ILLNESS: In the event a student becomes seriously injured or ill during the school day, efforts will be made to contact the parent or guardian to determine appropriate action.

STUDENT INSURANCE: The School District **DOES NOT** provide accident insurance for students attending school. Parents are encouraged to carry health and accident insurance on

students. Parents may choose to purchase the group rate student insurance that is available from a commercial insurance company.

STUDENT INTERVIEWS: Any person who seeks to confer with a student during school hours or to leave a message for a student shall provide positive identification to the building administrator. Interviews of a student normally will not be granted unless the building administrator deems it essential to the welfare of the child. When interviews are conducted by police officers or other state officials, the principal, teaching principal, or designee must be present. However, if the Office of Children's Services of D.H.S.S. or a law enforcement agency have determined that the presence of the school official will interfere with the investigation, then a school official will not be present. The School District form entitled "Certification of Necessity for Interview" must first be completed and signed by the school administrator and the agent of one of the above noted agencies.

STUDENT RECORDS: Schools collect and maintain student records to provide for the growth and development of individual students, to provide information to the parents and authorized staff, and to provide a basis for the evaluation and improvement of school programs. A parent or guardian of a student, who is under the age of 18 years and currently enrolled in the District, or records of whom are otherwise maintained by the District, has the right to inspect and review such student's record or any part thereof. The contents of a student's record may be furnished to any other person with the written consent of one of the student's parents or guardians.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL: A suspension is a denial of the right of school attendance, either from a single class or up to and including any full schedule of classes for a limited period of time. Expulsion is the permanent denial of the privilege of school attendance within the School District by the School Board. The School Board may consider readmission of a student after one year. Depending on the circumstances, expelled students may be permitted to attend school in an alternative setting during their expulsion. More information on suspensions and expulsions can be found in the Student Rights and Responsibilities section referenced in this Handbook.

VENDING MACHINES and OTHER FOOD SALES: Childhood obesity is a grave and urgent concern that demands immediate attention, solutions, and resources. The District is partly responsible for teaching children about the value of healthy food choices. Vending machines, snack bars, school stores, and a la carte sales must feature items that are consistent with education in nutrition and healthy choices. The Superintendent or designee may permit food sales by student or adult entities or organizations provided that these sales comply with state and federal regulations, do not impair the food service's ability to be financially sound, and observe appropriate sanitation and safety procedures.

No foods of minimal nutritional value shall be sold in food service areas during breakfast/lunch periods.

Any snack sold outside of the federal meal programs between the hours of 12:00 AM and 30 minutes after the conclusion of the instructional day shall meet nutritional requirements of the National School Lunch Act, *Nutritional Guidelines for All Foods Sold in Schools*, also known as *Smart Snacks at School* (Federal Register/Vol. 78, No. 125).

VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT: Violence and harassment is prohibited between students, between staff members, between staff members and students, and from members of the

public directed at students or staff on school property or at school sponsored events. Some examples of violence and harassment may include, but are not limited to, threats, insults, or assaults; unwelcome patting, pinching, or physical contact; obscene gesturing or language; or slurs of an ethnic, racial or sexual orientation nature.

If a student or staff member feels that his/her emotional well-being, his/her sense of safety and security or sense of self-worth is being affected by such conduct, a complaint should be filed by contacting his/her school principal or the District's EEO officer. All incidents of such conduct will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency and the Office of Children's Services, if appropriate.

VISITORS: All persons are welcome on District property when there for legitimate purposes. Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit the school. Individuals are discouraged from attending classes in a role other than as a parent, volunteer, or presenter.

Individuals not enrolled in a school must report to the main office immediately upon entering the school grounds or building. A visitor's pass is issued to all visitors and must be worn at all times while on school property. This precaution is taken to protect all students and visitors in the event of an emergency.

Visits to classrooms must be scheduled with the respective teacher and principal. This will allow the teacher to introduce the parent or observer, review expectations of visitors, and minimize any impact on the classroom climate to which the students are accustomed. Persons who do not have a valid reason for their presence, or who do not comply with school rules, may be denied access to District property. Individuals who proceed onto District property without proper authorization shall be treated as trespassers and shall be subject to prosecution under relevant state statutes and/or municipal ordinances.

VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE (1240 BP/1240 AR): The wealth of experience available in the community is a resource that should be used in appropriate ways to enrich the educational program and strengthen our schools' relationships with homes, businesses, public agencies and private institutions. By their presence, volunteers also can make school environments safer and more closely supervised. The School Board encourages parents/guardians and other members of the community to share their time, knowledge and abilities with our students.

The Chief School Administrator/Superintendent or designee may authorize the use of volunteers. The Superintendent or designee shall establish regulations to protect the safety of students, employees, and volunteers. Like employees and students, volunteers shall act in accordance with District policies and regulations.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL: A written request from the parents or guardian must be presented to the student's school office if a student is to withdraw from school. Further instructions as to procedure for withdrawal will be given at that time. No less than three (3) days advance notice of withdrawal is requested. When notification is less than three (3) days, it may result in a delay in preparing the student records for withdrawal.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

REGULATIONS GOVERNING PUPILS RIDING SCHOOL BUSES: Alaska statutes do not mandate pupil transportation. School bus transportation is provided as a courtesy and is a privilege, not a right. If a student's conduct is such that the health, safety, comfort, or the well-being of others is jeopardized, on or off the bus, a school district official may deny the privilege of riding the bus. The school bus driver is in charge of the bus and its passengers and has total authority and responsibility. Only designated school officials are authorized to suspend transportation privileges.

General Policies:

1. Students are required to ride the bus assigned to them and to board and disembark at their assigned stop. Students may be transported to an unassigned bus stop or on a different bus on an occasional basis or for periods of time less than 30 days upon approval by the school office. Parents should contact the school office with their request. Requests for students to be transported to unassigned bus stops or on different buses for more than 30 days must be directed to the Transportation Office. The student must give the driver a Bus Pass issued by the school office authorizing this transportation.
2. Parents may not remove a student from a bus after the student has boarded without a Bus Pass or approval by a school representative.
3. Students will be issued School Bus Conduct Reports for infractions of the rules by the bus driver. The school bus driver and the school principal are responsible for handling behavioral problems occurring on the school bus, but only the school principal, or his/her designee, has the authority to suspend a student's bus riding privileges.

At All Times:

1. Students must follow the directions of the school bus driver. His/her primary concern is student safety.
2. Students should exercise good manners, caution and consideration for other people.
3. Elementary students will be assigned seats by the driver. High school and middle school students may also be assigned seats at the discretion of the driver.
4. Students may not have anything in their possession that may cause injury to others.
5. Hanging onto any portion of the school bus from outside the school bus, whether the bus is moving or not, is illegal and DANGEROUS.
6. Items that can be held in the student's lap or under the student's seat in the bus may be transported on the bus. Some large musical instruments, which are not larger than 43" x 14" x 10", may be transported on the bus. These instruments must be placed in the seat with the student next to the window. Tubas, drums, and some bass guitars or other instruments larger than specified above may not be transported.
7. Any electronic device that plays music may be allowed on the bus if it is audible only to the student using the device. Devices that play music may be transported only on buses servicing schools which allow such devices on campus. Any items not permitted at school may not be transported on the bus.
8. The District digital media citizenship policies and expectations apply to the use of all electronics on the bus.
9. Parents are responsible for damages to the school bus due to the misconduct of their children.
10. No animals, large or small, of any kind, are allowed on the bus at any time.
11. Ice skates must have protective guards on the blades or be placed in an appropriate

box. Paper bags are not adequate blade protection. Hockey bags may be transported either under the seat or on the seat with the student next to the window.

12. Skis, ski poles and other such sharp-edged objects will not be permitted unless previously coordinated with the Unit Principal and the Pupil Transportation Department. Sleds and plastic toboggans may not be transported.

Waiting for the Bus:

1. Walk on the left-hand side of the road facing traffic.
2. Stay a safe distance from the roadway.
3. Be at your stop five (5) minutes ahead of time. Your school bus driver has a schedule to keep and cannot wait for you. Be on time for your bus.
4. Line up at the place designated by the bus driver when the school bus approaches.
5. Stay clear of the wheels until the school bus has come to a complete stop-- don't play or push others.
6. Students must cross the roadway approximately (15) feet in front of the bus and only when the driver motions for pupils to cross. Stop immediately if the bus driver sounds the horn!

Boarding and Off-Loading the School Bus:

1. Students boarding from the right must also wait for the driver's hand signal to board.
2. Let the smaller children board first.
3. Always use the handrail and go up and down the steps one at a time.
4. Don't push, crowd or disturb others.
5. When boarding, go directly to your seat and be seated.
6. After you leave the bus, go directly home or to the assigned place.

Conduct on the School Bus:

In general, classroom conduct will be observed. The school bus is not a playground. Save horseplay and wrestling for another place and time.

1. Place books and other gear in your lap.
2. Avoid loud talking, confusion, or anything else that might distract the driver.
3. Do not sit in the driver's seat or interfere with him/her in any manner at anytime.
4. Keep quiet near railroad tracks so that the driver can listen for trains.
5. Keep head, arms and body inside the bus.
6. Do not throw objects inside or out of the bus.
7. Do not vape, smoke, eat, drink, or make use of, or have in possession, alcohol, drugs or controlled substances on the bus.
8. Remain seated until the bus has come to a complete stop and get off only at your assigned bus stop.
9. Do not open windows without permission; maximum two (2) notches.
10. Do not damage the bus and always assist in keeping it clean.
11. Keep feet on the floor in front of the seat, not in the aisle.
12. Fighting with other students and/or attacking other students or the driver is prohibited.
13. Use of abusive, vulgar language, or directing such language toward other students or adults, is prohibited.
14. Keep the aisle and the exits clear.

15. The emergency door and exit controls may be used only during supervised drills or actual emergencies.

Misconduct Policy and Procedures: Drivers are responsible for maintaining order on the buses. Administering sanctions for misconduct on the school bus is the responsibility of the principal at the school where the student is enrolled. Again, only the principal or designee has the authority to suspend a student's bus riding privileges. It is the responsibility of the principal to inform parents when a student has been suspended.

In the event of misbehavior on the part of the student riding the bus, the bus driver may issue the student a "School Bus Conduct Report" for minor and/or major infractions. The driver will complete the School Bus Conduct Report. Three (3) copies will be forwarded to the Unit Principal and one (1) copy will be retained by the Pupil Transportation Department. The Principal will forward one (1) copy to the parents and return one (1) copy to the Pupil Transportation Department indicating any disciplinary action taken. The following courses of action are considered as minimum:

1. Depending on the nature and severity of the incident, the first conduct report may result in a warning, or other disciplinary action, up to and including temporary or permanent suspension of bus privileges by the principal.
2. The second conduct report will result in the imposition of "PROBATIONARY" status. This process will include counseling with the student and official notification to the parents of the probationary action. Bus riding privileges may be denied the student for additional violations.
3. The third conduct report may result in suspension of bus privileges for a minimum of three (3) days, depending on the severity of the incident, and may not be reinstated until after a conference with the student and school personnel.
4. The fourth conduct report will result in suspension of bus privileges. In either case, privileges will not be reinstated until such time a conference has been held with the student, the parents, principal and the Transportation Department.

This procedure will not preclude the right and responsibility of school officials to take other immediate action, as may be necessary in their judgment, for the preservation of good order and specifically for the safety and well-being of other persons who ride the bus.

For Safety's Sake: The bus driver has full responsibility and authority for the safety of students while they are being transported on a Mat-Su School District bus. Students must be responsible for their own conduct on the bus and not risk their own safety or the safety of others. Habitual misconduct may result in permanent suspension from the privilege of bus transportation. Suspension from bus transportation does not excuse the student from school attendance. Parents should discuss safety and good behavior on the bus with their children. Parent support of the bus driver and the school will ensure safe rides to and from school.

Remember: Riding on the school bus is a privilege and not a right.

1. If a pupil's conduct is such that the health, safety, comfort, or well-being of others is jeopardized, on or off the bus, the privilege of riding the bus may be denied by a school district official.
2. Have a safe, pleasant, and enjoyable trip.
3. For information, please call the Pupil Transportation Office at 761-4357.

SCHOOL AND ROAD CLOSURE INFORMATION

District Personnel will do their best to determine by 5:00 A.M. the status of all school closures and or delays. This decision to close or not close schools is informed by weather and road conditions throughout the Mat-Su.

Parents can use their discretion to keep their child home if they feel that is the best course of action for their family. Parents can notify the school of the absence and make a plan to make up any missed work.

Knowing that the Mat-Su does experience frozen rain, hail, snow, strong winds, and cold temperatures, the District encourages all students to dress appropriately for the weather.

The methods listed below will be used to inform the public of school closures or bus delays. Bus delay information will be sent when a bus is running more than 15 minutes late directly to families.

- MSBSD [Facebook page](#) - Like us on Facebook! Our page will be updated with the most current information. Facebook posts are embedded below. Click the like button to follow us.
- [MSBSD Website](#) Headlines - Check the first headline for updated information.
- Blackboard Mass Notification - Text, Phone and Email messages with most current information will be sent to all contacts for students riding affected buses. To manage additional contact information, you can create a MyConnect account [here](#).
- Call the School Closure Line - (907) 746.9200 and dial 8.
- [Where's My Bus](#) - Parents can use this tool to see where their student's bus is. Use your primary phone number that was used upon registration as the username and password.

NOTICE OF AHERA COMPLIANCE

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, in order to maintain a safe educational environment in our school facilities, has completed the school inspection and planning requirements as established by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Our school buildings have been thoroughly inspected for the presence of asbestos containing materials. Although we have identified asbestos materials in our facilities, these materials are not "friable" (crushable by hand pressure to release fibers) and do not present a hazard to any of our students or our faculty and staff.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District has developed an asbestos Management Plan for all buildings found to contain asbestos-containing building materials. Interested persons can review the Inspection Report and Management Plan by contacting the Principal's office of the school in which they are interested, or by contacting the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District Facilities Department at 864-2005.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ([5144.01 BP](#))

SECTION REFERENCE

- A. Introduction
- B. Student Bill of Rights
- C. Conduct Requirements
- D. Sanctions
- E. Search and Seizure
- F. Disciplinary Hearings
- G. Definitions

INTRODUCTION

In order to maintain a conducive environment for quality education, there must be a spirit of mutual respect and involvement among the members of the school community. One goal of public schools is to provide students with opportunities to exercise their human rights as citizens and to participate meaningfully in school affairs. Only in this manner can a true understanding be conveyed of the fundamental principles to which this nation is dedicated.

This policy and the procedures instituted hereunder are intended to encourage the active involvement of students in their education, and to foster the spirit of free inquiry and expression within the framework of orderly and responsible behavior. It is the intent of the School District to afford vigilant protection of the constitutional rights of all members of the school community and, equally, to prescribe and control conduct within the schools, consistent with the safeguards of the Constitution.

1. School Personnel. It is the responsibility of all School District personnel to enforce and comply with this policy and the procedures instituted hereunder. The Board of Education and the administration support all personnel acting within the framework of this policy.

With proper recognition and provision for student and teacher involvement, the school principal is charged with the responsibility of maintaining order and decorum in his or her school. When conditions warrant, it is to be understood that the Superintendent of Schools, school principal, or other authorized school official shall enforce those standards of conduct necessary for order in the schools and shall request the assistance of local and state law enforcement authorities in fulfilling their responsibilities to maintain order whenever, in the judgment of school officials, such assistance is necessary.

Authority for decision-making at the building level rests with the principal or designated representative in accordance with established School District policies and procedures and interpretation thereof by the principal or other appropriate school official. This does not preclude the opportunity for appeal to the next level of authority for review of problems and decisions.

Educational decisions rest with professionally trained staff after students have had an opportunity for involvement. This occurs by virtue of the professional competencies of the staff, their age and maturity, and particularly considering the legal and moral responsibilities incumbent upon (and understood to be duties,

responsibilities, and obligations of) such positions as required by the Board of Education, the State of Alaska, and the community at large.

2. Parents. Parents are expected to cooperate with school authorities and to participate in conferences regarding the behavior of their children. Parents may be held responsible for the willful misbehavior of their children, if such behavior results in damage to school property.
3. Students. While on school grounds, facilities, or at school-sponsored activities, students shall comply with District policies and regulations pertaining to student conduct.

Students shall have the right to participate, as suitable to their age and maturity, in decision-making processes, student government, and student organizations. They shall have the constitutional rights to freedom of assembly and expression, and the right to possess and distribute literature, as set forth in Board policies pertaining to student organizations and publications.

In addition, an individual student or group of students shall have the means by which they may discuss problems, make complaints, seek information, make recommendations, seek redress of grievances, or otherwise act individually or as a group with regard to school problems, curriculum matters, and school activities.

If the situation warrants it, such student involvement may be accomplished through the student government or through a subcommittee or special group as determined by the student government and approved by the building principal.

All policies and regulations pertaining to student conduct, discipline, rights, and responsibilities — whether adopted by the Board or issued by the administration — shall be made known to students, who shall in turn be held accountable for complying with them.

A. STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS

1. Right to Education

- a. The school-age person in this state has the right to receive a public education, and deprivation of that right may occur only for just cause and in accordance with due process of law.
- b. No student may be prohibited from nor inhibited in participation in any School District activity or program with respect to gender, race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender identification, or marital or parental status. Separate arrangements may be made for student participation according to gender in human sexuality programs, in interscholastic sports, and in physical education or sport activities involving bodily contact. No student may be prohibited from nor inhibited in participation in any School District activity or program because of physical or mental disability, except to the extent that such disability actually precludes effective participation in the activity or program.

2. Freedom of Expression

- a. Students are entitled to express verbally their personal opinions in a manner that does not interfere with the educational process, that does not interfere with the freedom of others to express themselves, and that does not interfere with the ability of others to enjoy their rights, including rights of privacy and of preservation of reputation.
- b. Students are entitled to express in writing their personal opinions but are expected to exercise responsibility and good judgment in doing so. The distribution of such materials may not materially and substantially interfere with or disrupt the educational process.
- c. Students have the right to do necessary research for articles, including public opinion polls, if all proper procedures are followed.
- d. Students have the right to distribute leaflets and handbills at times and at places determined by the principal or the principal's designee. The students who edit, publish or distribute such leaflets and handbills among their fellow students assume the responsibility for the content of such publications. The principal or designee shall be entitled to predistribution examination of materials to ascertain whether these materials would disrupt the orderly educational process. Such decisions should be communicated to the student within a reasonably prompt period of time.
- e. A student's style of dress and grooming will not be regulated by the School District, except to the extent reasonably necessary to promote the educational environment.
- f. Students may wear or display buttons, armbands, flags, decals and other items of symbolic expression, unless the manner of expression is obscene, vulgar, defamatory, promotes or advertises alcohol or drugs, or substantially interferes with the educational process or with the rights of others.
- g. A student may abstain from the pledge of allegiance or salute to the flag.

3. Freedom of Association, Assembly, and Petition

- a. Students have the freedom to associate as they see fit, so long as their associations do not substantially interfere with the educational mission of the School District.
- b. Students have the freedom to assemble peacefully. There is an appropriate time and place for such assemblies. Meetings of school-sponsored organizations on school property shall be conducted at times and at places approved by the principal or by the principal's designee. If student assembly occurs during instructional time, and has been approved by the principal or by the principal's designee, participating students will be permitted to make-up school work according to the

make-up work policy.

- c. Students have the right to petition the school, the School District Administration, and the School Board for changes in activities, programs, and school rules and for redress of all grievances.

4. Student Records

A student's record is open to inspection by the student or by the student's parents or guardian upon appointment during regular school hours.

B. CONDUCT REQUIREMENTS

Certain student conduct is prohibited because it diminishes the learning abilities of that student or other students in the educational community. Students who fail to conform to the required conduct may be subject to appropriate corrective action. Such action may range from simple discipline to expulsion depending on the nature of the conduct and the potential or actual harm caused by the conduct. Illegal as well as other wrongful behaviors are subject to disciplinary action by the school district. The following list is not all inclusive.

1. Academic Honesty

The School Board believes that personal integrity is basic to all solid achievement. Students will reach their full potential only by being honest with themselves and with others. Cheating, plagiarizing (stealing and using the ideas, work, or writing of another as one's own), and other types of dishonest behavior is unacceptable and prohibited.

2. Attendance

Studies have shown that student attendance at school is directly related to student success. Parents, students, and schools need to work together to promote attendance and success. In order to effectuate positive results and good communication, an automated telephone call will be made to the parents when a student is absent; a written notice will be mailed to the parents after five days of absence. After nine days of absenteeism, the student's absences will be considered habitual and another written notice will be mailed to the parents. In cases of habitually truant students, a referral may be made to the Office of Children's Services. After ten cumulative absences in a semester an administrative, parent, and student conference is required. Schools are encouraged to have positive incentive programs to reward good attendance by students and staff. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in student attendance and to alert the school when their child is to be absent. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to keep up with school work when the he or she is absent from school.

3. Students in grades K-5 who attend a minimum of 3.5 hours, regardless of the time of the day, are present for a full day. Students who attend less than 3.5 hours, regardless of the time of the day, are present for a half day.

A student is considered tardy 5 minutes after the start of elementary school and after the bell rings for each class in middle and high school.

High school and middle school absences are to be recorded each class period on the district's student information system by the teacher.

The principal shall have the final authority and discretion on matters related to such discipline for truancy.

4. Banned Substances

No student may possess, ingest, deliver, or sell alcoholic beverages, beer, products containing alcohol, or other non-alcoholic beers and cocktails, illegal drugs (controlled substances), synthetic/herbal drugs, tobacco, tobacco products, nicotine delivery devices, any other intoxicants, or substances purported to be alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs.

No student may possess over the counter medications (e.g, No-Doz, aspirin, vitamins, herbal supplements, liquid cough and cold medications, etc.) Possession shall include lockers, backpacks, and vehicles.

5. Personal digital devices

Teachers may permit the purposeful use of personal digital devices in support of the curriculum. These personal digital devices are the sole responsibility of the owners. The school is not responsible for the loss or theft of these devices, unless the loss or theft of the device occurs when the device has been confiscated by a school official for discipline or safety reasons.

6. Cooperation with School Personnel

Students must obey the lawful instructions of all School District personnel. District personnel can be identified by personal ID badge.

7. Criminal Acts

The commission of or participation in any criminal activity is prohibited. The school may take disciplinary action regardless of whether or not criminal charges are brought by the authorities or the result of prosecution.

8. Demonstrations

Conducting demonstrations or meetings, which materially and substantially interfere with the educational process or the lawful activities of others, is prohibited.

9. Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior is student conduct which materially and substantially interferes with the educational process or with school-sponsored activities, and is not permitted. Examples of disruptive behavior include, but are not

limited to, refusing to acknowledge or to obey a school employee's directions, and behavior which jeopardizes the welfare or safety of other students and staff.

10. Dress and Appearance

Student dress and general appearance is a shared responsibility among students, parents/guardians, and the school. The Board of Education believes that appropriate dress and grooming contribute to a productive and safe learning environment. The Board expects students to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to wear clothes that are suitable for the school activities, including industry requirements at the work site, in which they participate. s have the right to make individual choices from a wide range of clothing and grooming styles, but they must not present a health, safety hazard, or a distraction which would interfere with the educational process. Attire bearing expression or insignia which is obscene, libelous, or which advocates racial, religious, or other prejudice is prohibited. Attire which advertises illegal substances for school age students is prohibited, as are items which suggest sex, alcohol, or tobacco products. Clothing which does not cover undergarments is prohibited. s wearing prohibited attire will be asked to cover it, change it, or go home until proper attire is worn.

The following minimum standards will be enforced:

- a. Clothing and accessories, e.g., notebooks, patches, tattoos, and jewelry must not display racial or ethnic slurs or symbols, gang affiliations, vulgar, subversive, sexually suggestive, or otherwise inappropriate language or images; promotion of products that students may not legally buy such as alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs; or anything that promotes harm to another or to one's self.
- b. Prohibited items include studded jewelry or chains, sunglasses unless medically required, sleepwear or clothing resembling sleepwear.

11. Drug Paraphernalia

No student may advertise, use, possess, exchange, or sell drug paraphernalia.

12. Fighting and Assault

Fighting, assault, and other aggressive acts are uncivilized and have no place in an institution of learning and are accordingly prohibited. All fighting will be deemed to be mutual assault, unless a participant in the fight clearly shows that his or her conduct was justified self-defense in the absence of a reasonable opportunity to retreat from the fight. The principal may exercise discretion in determining appropriate sanctions.

13. Harassment/Bullying/Discrimination

Harassment, bullying, and discrimination are prohibited. Abusive language, sexual harassment, cyber-bullying, inappropriate physical contact, racial or ethnic slurs, hazing, and other similar provocative actions are included in

these categories of prohibited conduct. Harassment is behavior which is intended to trouble or annoy someone. It is the exertion of power by one person over another; it may be based on misunderstanding or a deliberate act and often contains a subjective perspective. Discrimination and harassment may be based on culture, ability, physical appearance, size, sexuality, or religion, among other things. Bullying is defined as repeated, aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. bullying, and discrimination can take many forms such as hitting, tripping, kicking, punching, unwanted touching, name-calling, swearing, threatening, spreading rumors, ignoring, staring, gesturing, "standing over," preventing someone from joining in an activity, hiding, sending mean notes or e-mails, or damaging someone else's property.

14. Hazing

Hazing is defined as any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off the school grounds, (i.e. trips) to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. The principal will take appropriate disciplinary action against groups or individuals found to have violated this policy.

15. Student Handbook

The policies and procedures of each school, which govern the conduct of students, shall be assembled in written form and made available to all stakeholders. Students shall obey these rules.

16. Illegal Substances

No student may be under the influence or in possession of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or any other intoxicants. Under the influence is presumed from consumption and the standard is set at zero tolerance. At the request of a school official, parents may provide the results of a clinical drug test to be used in an investigation to determine if a student is under the influence.

Possession shall include lockers, backpacks, and vehicles.

17. Medication

Parents frequently request that their child be given medications during the school day. Parents should be encouraged to ask their physician to establish a medication schedule, so that medication can be administered at home before and after school whenever possible. In order to prevent unnecessary school absence, if a student is deemed not to be contagious, parents may arrange for medication to be administered by the school nurse by completing a Medical Authorization Form.

Medication prescribed by a licensed health care provider may be given by the school nurse during the school day if the following criteria are met:

- a. The Medication Authorization Form must be completed and on file in the student's health record for any prescribed medication.
- b. A signed note from the parents requesting the medication be administered at school must state the hours it is to be administered at school as well as a schedule of when it will be given at home. The directions on the label are to be followed.
- c. Over-the-counter medication can be dispensed at the discretion of the school nurse if a completed Non-prescription Request Form is on file and the medication is on the list of approved over the counter medications for the Mat-Su Borough School District.
- d. Prescribed medications must be in the appropriately labeled pharmacy container stating the physician's name, child's name, name of medication and dosage, and specific directions for use.

18. Initiations

Participation in activities such as initiations, hazing, intimidation, or other activities designed to create group affiliation, which may present the danger of physical, mental, or emotional harm are prohibited.

19. Internet Use/Misuse

District computers and networks must be in support of education, research, and the educational goals and objectives of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District. Students are personally responsible for this provision at all times when using District computers. Misuse is defined as any malicious attempt to physically deface, disable, or destroy computers, peripherals, or other network hardware, to harm or destroy data of another user or any other agencies or networks that are connected to the system, to gain access or attempt to gain access to unauthorized systems or to access inappropriate materials from school computers. Content accessed through district provided internet and software applications will be filtered for material deemed inappropriate or unsafe for students. Attempt to bypass the District's internet filtering software is prohibited. District computers, digital devices, and networks must be used in support of educational goals and objectives. Any misuse will result in loss of computer privileges, disciplinary action, or possible legal referral.

20. Off-Campus Events

At school sponsored off-campus events and on school buses, students shall be governed by School District rules and shall be subject to the authority of School District personnel. Additionally, students are subject to all rules and regulations of their home school and those of the host school or organization.

21. Parking Permits

Although the School District provides bus transportation for students, with

certain exceptions, it recognizes the necessity for some students to drive automobiles to school. All students who drive to school may be required to obtain a parking permit. When a student drives on a school campus, they are consenting to a potential search of the vehicle by school officials with reasonable suspicion that the vehicle may contain drugs, alcohol, weapons, or evidence of any activity which is illegal or in violation of school or district policy. In the interest of safety, improper student driving practices may subject the offending student to discipline. The District may charge a parking fee. The District may restrict banners, bumper stickers or any offensive objectionable materials visible on or in the car.

22. Publications

School sponsored student publications shall be subject to the editorial discretion of the school principal or designee. These publications shall conform to the objectives of the school curriculum. The school principal or designee shall review and approve these student publications before printing or distribution.

- a. Generally, the restrictions and regulations governing responsible journalism, as defined by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, should be applied to student publications. The following material and language is prohibited from publications distributed on school property:
 - i. obscenity;
 - ii. libel;
 - iii. incitement and calls for violence;
 - iv. matter which violates the rights of privacy of another;
 - v. profane or vulgar language which would not be used by local newspapers; and
 - vii. advertisements for tobacco, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs and paraphernalia, or any other product or substance the sale of which is prohibited to or by any school-age student as defined by state statutes.
- b. Publications being distributed on school property may be seized by the principal or designee who has reasonable cause to believe that such publications contain any material forbidden above. Seized publications may be made available to the parents or guardian.
- c. Commercial solicitation is not to be allowed on school property. Non-school newspapers may be distributed only at times and at places and in a manner determined by the principal or designee.
- d. Students who wish to administer a survey to classmates or schoolmates shall first have the survey approved by the teacher, principal, and, if necessary, obtain permission of all parents of students taking the survey. A questionnaire or survey, whether anonymous or not, that inquires into personal or private family affairs of the student not a matter of public record or subject to public observation may not be administered or permitted in a school unless written permission is obtained from the student's parent or legal guardian. (For purposes of this section a "questionnaire or survey" means a list of questions to, or

information collected from, a class or group of students.) For an anonymous questionnaire or survey, written permission may be obtained annually and is valid until the commencement of the subsequent school year or until the parent or legal guardian who gave permission submits a written withdrawal of permission to the school principal. The school shall provide each student's parent or legal guardian at least two weeks' notice before administering a questionnaire or survey.

If a school administers to a student a questionnaire or survey that is not anonymous, the school shall obtain written permission from the student's parent or legal guardian at least two weeks before the questionnaire or survey is administered. (AK Statute 14.03.110)

23. Self Identification

All students must, upon request, identify themselves to authorized School District personnel who properly identify themselves as being in a position of authority.

24. Sexting

Sexting is defined as the act of sending sexually explicit materials electronically and is strictly prohibited.

25. Sexual Misconduct

The School District is committed to creating an academic environment that is safe and secure for all students. Sexual misconduct is contradictory to the School District's core values and will not be tolerated. The District aims to eliminate sexual misconduct through education by encouraging staff and students to route concerns or complaints through the proper channels. Sexual acts of any type, at school, off campus events, during sponsored activities, or on a school bus are prohibited. Such acts include, but are not limited to, fondling, oral sex, or intercourse. Any of these acts could lead to a semester suspension or possible expulsion with loss of credit.

Sexual misconduct includes a wide range of unacceptable behavior, including but not limited to, rape, sexual assault, which includes all nonconsensual sexual contact, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, stalking and any other conduct of a sexual nature, undertaken without mutual consent or which has the purpose or effect of threatening or intimidating a person. Although sexual misconduct often includes unwanted or nonconsensual sexual contact, sexual contact is not necessary for an act to be considered sexual misconduct.

Consent to sexual activity is defined as knowing and voluntary agreement between the participants to engage in sexual activity. Consent cannot be given by a person who is asleep or physical or cognitive/mentally impaired by any alcohol, drug or other intoxicant. Consent cannot be compelled by force, threat of force, or deception, and cannot be given by a person who is unaware that the sexual act is being committed, who is mentally impaired or

who lacks the physical ability to resist or consent to the sexual activity. Consent cannot be given if it is coerced by supervisory or disciplinary authority. Per state law, agreement given under any of the above-described conditions does not constitute consent.

When there is not mutual consent to sexual activity or contact, a student will be sanctioned and the incident reported to the police. It may become necessary that the perpetrator move to another school. Student(s) found in violation of sexual misconduct may be suspended for a semester or expelled from school.

Consensual sexual relationships should never exist among student and staff and will be vigorously pursued. Any behavior will be reported to law enforcement and the Professional Teaching Practices Commission (PTPC).

26. Social Media Networking

Students are free to express their opinions online. However, all students are responsible for the content of their online behavior. This can include any form of cyber-bullying of anyone. See definition of cyber-bullying. Inappropriate material may be subject to disciplinary action by the school.

27. Tobacco

Students shall not smoke/vape any substance or otherwise use nor possess tobacco, or nicotine delivery device products anywhere on school property or at activities under school jurisdiction.

28. Vandalism

Vandalism is the willful or malicious destruction of public or private property. Acts of vandalism deprive students of the use and enjoyment of valuable educational resources. Vandalism adds to the costs the community must bear in providing educational opportunities to all students. Vandalism in all forms is prohibited.

29. Weapons

Students may not possess firearms, ammunition, or explosive devices on school property or while participating in school-sponsored events. Students may not possess other types of weapons or replicas of any types of weapons on school property or while participating in a school-sponsored event, unless permission to do so is obtained from an administrator or from a teacher authorized to give that permission. Any item used with the intent to do harm or cause fear of harm may be deemed a weapon. Students possessing unauthorized weapons on school property must have a Behavioral Threat Action and Support Plan in place before returning to school.

C. SANCTIONS

1. Disciplinary Authority

- a. The School Board creates general and specific policies, which control student behavior and discipline. It also considers appeals of significant disciplinary decisions by principals or by the Superintendent or designee. Only the School Board has the authority to expel a student.
- b. The Superintendent or designee at his or her discretion may implement additional rules and procedures, consistent with the policies established by the School Board, to regulate student conduct. Each principal shall implement written school rules and procedures, consistent with the policies of the School Board and with the rules and procedures issued by the Superintendent or designee, to regulate student conduct. The School Board, Superintendent, principal, or their respective designees, are authorized to suspend or otherwise to discipline students for cause and to recommend expulsion.
- c. Each teacher has the authority to control student behavior in the teacher's class and during activities committed during the teacher's supervision. Each teacher has the authority to discipline students in a manner consistent with School Board policies and administrative guidelines.

2. Types of Discipline

When breaches of school disciplinary rules and regulations occur, it is the responsibility of involved teachers and administrators to work with the student, the student's parents, and other support personnel to help the student correct the behavior.

All disciplinary actions should be directed toward protecting the welfare of the school community as well as helping the student develop self-discipline. When determining the response for a specific breach of discipline, school personnel must consider the nature of the act, the student's previous history, age and maturation, any mitigating circumstances, and the effect of the student's actions on the welfare of the school community.

Disciplinary responses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Expulsion
- ii. Short term, interim, or long term suspension; and/or
- iii. Compensatory or commensurate services equal to the infraction, such as restoring property;
- iv. Referral to outside agency including Juvenile Court;
- v. Temporary removal from class or activity (24 hours or less);
- vi. Probation;
- vii. Restriction;
- viii. Denial of privileges;
- ix. Detention before or after school;
- x. Loss of co-curricular privileges;
- xi. Request for parent conference;
- xii. Suspension of bus privileges (for bus misconduct);
- xiii. Immediate correction;

- xiv. Warning;
- xv. Saturday detention;
- xvi. Peer mediation;
- xvii. Counseling;

- a. **Simple Discipline:** Simple discipline includes any disciplinary action against a student other than long-term suspension or expulsion. Simple disciplinary action will not be taken in such a manner as to prevent a student from accomplishing specific academic, grade level, or graduation requirements.
- b. **Suspension:** A suspension is a denial of the right of school attendance, either from a single class or up to and including any full schedule of classes for a limited period of time.
 - i. **Short-Term Suspension:** A short-term suspension is a suspension ordered by the administration which will not exceed ten school days in duration. A short-term suspension may only be appealed to the school principal or to a peer review.
 - ii. **Interim Suspension:** An interim suspension is to be used for students whose presence poses an immediate or continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process. Immediate removal from school may occur. In such cases, the required hearing and/or investigation shall follow as soon as is practical. An interim suspension will not exceed ten school days.
 - iii. **Long-Term Suspension:** Long-term suspension is any suspension which is ordered to last for more than ten school days. A long-term suspension shall not exceed a semester, but if a long-term suspension is ordered at the end of a semester requiring a loss of credit, it may be served either retroactively or during the upcoming semester as directed by the principal. Students may lose academic credit during a long-term suspension. Students may enroll in correspondence schools, home schools, or participate in an assigned alternative placement during a long-term suspension.

***NOTE:** A principal may refer a student who has been given a long term suspension for a) alcohol use, b) drug use, c) aggressive behavior, or d) self-harming behavior to the Mat-Su Day School for an Educational Conference. In the case of aggressive or self-harming behavior, the site Behavioral Threat Management Team will convene and follow district protocol to develop an Action Support Plan. The length of the suspension may be mitigated by the principal if the student complies with the recommendations of the Educational Conference.

- 4. **Expulsion:** Expulsion is the permanent denial of the privilege of school attendance within the School District by the School Board. The School Board may consider readmission of a student after one year. Depending on the circumstances, expelled students may be

permitted to attend school in an alternative setting during their expulsion.

3. Limitations on Suspensions and Expulsions

- a. A student may be suspended or expelled from school for any of the following causes:
 - i. Continued willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of reasonable school authority;
 - ii. Behavior which is contrary to the welfare, safety, or morals of other pupils, of employees of the School District, of volunteers assisting the School District, or of any other members of the educational community;
 - iii. Conviction of a felony or other crime that the School District determines will cause the attendance of the child to be contrary to the welfare or education of other students. Felony convictions, no matter where the criminal conduct occurred, that may cause the suspension or expulsion of a student, include but are not limited to the following:
 1. AIDING AND ABETTING: Assisting in the commission of any of the felonies below, with the result of being legally accountable for crimes of another. AS 11.16. 100-130.
 2. ARSON: Willful and malicious setting of fire, or attempt to set fire. AS 11.46.400-410, 11.31.100 (a).
 3. ATTEMPTING OR SOLICITATION: Attempting to commit any of the foregoing felonies or soliciting another to do so. AS 11.31.100-110.
 4. BURGLARY: Unlawful entry with intent to commit a crime. AS 11.46.300-310.
 5. CRIMINAL POSSESSION OF EXPLOSIVES: AS 11.61.240-250.
 6. EXTORTION OR BLACKMAIL: Obtaining money, property, or actions by violence or threat of violence or untrue accusations or public ridicule. AS 11.46.520-530.
 7. FELONIOUS ASSAULT: Physical threat directed at a person or an act of violence upon a person. AS 11.41.200-220, 11.41.410-438.
 8. LARCENY: Theft without force or violence against another person. AS 11.46.100-130.
 9. MALICIOUS MISCHIEF: Willful property damage or interference with property rights. AS 11.46.480, 482, 484.

10.MURDER: Intentionally causing the death of another. AS 11.41.100-120.

11.ROBBERY: Stealing from the person of another by force or threat of force. AS 11.41.500-510.

12.SALE, USE OF, POSSESSION OF ILLEGAL DRUGS: AS 11.71.010-040, AS 11.73.010.

- iv. Possession of a firearm, explosive device, or deadly weapon; and
- v. Other causes, including medical reasons, as set out in AS14.30.045.

- b. A student may be readmitted to school when it reasonably appears that the requirements of the unit administrator have been fully met.

4. **Discipline of Students with Disabilities**

- a. **Introduction:** These procedures define local administrative policies which are intended to maintain the District's compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 2004, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IV Chapter 52 Alaska Administrative Code, and the Alaska Special Education Handbook. The following narrative is a summary of general requirements necessary for providing a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) to children who possess disabilities.

The IDEA Amendments require districts to address student behavior issues in a proactive manner. The IEP team is required to consider, when appropriate, positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address students' behavior that may impede their learning or present safety issues. School personnel may discipline a student with disabilities in the same manner as nondisabled students, which might include short-term removals of up to and including 10 school days, consecutively or cumulatively, during one school year. If a school proposes to remove a disabled student for more than the accumulated 10 days, an IEP meeting must be scheduled immediately to determine if the misconduct is a manifestation of the student's disability. Additionally, the IEP team must, as appropriate, provide the child a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and develop/review a behavioral intervention plan.

- b. **School Sanctions:** Suspensions that count toward the accumulated 10 days for disabled students include:
 - i. In-school suspensions (unless the child is afforded the opportunity to continue to appropriately progress in the general curriculum, continue to receive IEP services and continue to participate with nondisabled children to the extent they would in their current placement);
 - ii. Suspension from bus transportation, only if the student is suspended from special transportation which is required by the IEP;

- iii. Interim suspensions;
- iv. Out of school suspensions; and,
- v. Expulsions.
- vi. Early dismissal from school, even without being formally suspended, counts toward ten days for determining need to conduct manifestation determination for a special education student.

A disciplinary sanction that will result in the disabled student being precluded from school attendance for more than the accumulation of 10 days during the school year may only be proposed until the IEP team can convene and consider taking action described in this section.

Manifestation Determination: A disabled student whose behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability may not receive a school sanction for more than the accumulation of ten days as described above. Rather, the misconduct will be addressed through the behavioral intervention plan. If, however, the IEP team determines that the behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability after a review of all relevant information, including the IEP and placement, suspension may be imposed. Suspensions accumulating to more than 10 school days may be imposed if the IEP team answers no to each of the following questions:

- i. Was the conduct in question caused by, or have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability?
- ii. Was the conduct in question the direct result of the District's failure to implement the student's IEP (including any behavior intervention plan)?

If the IEP team answers no to both of these questions, the misconduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, and the school may take disciplinary action in the same manner as it would for nondisabled students, except the student must, starting by the 11th day, continue to receive special education and related services under the student's IEP/504 plan in an alternative educational setting as determined by the student's IEP/504 team, that enable the child to continue to participate in the general curriculum, although in a different setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP.

When parents disagree with the manifestation determination, they have the right to request an expedited due process hearing in the manner provided in AS 14.30.193. Under these conditions, the student will remain in the current school placement until a hearing officer's decision is rendered, unless the disciplinary action is for behavior involving weapons or drugs, or serious bodily injury.

When parents disagree with the school's proposed disciplinary action, but agree with the IEP team's manifestation determination, they may request a hearing under the procedures for disciplinary hearings applicable to appeals from suspensions exceeding 10 days and expulsions. The District

must then ensure that all special education and disciplinary records are provided to the administrative hearing officer.

d. Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavioral Intervention:

For special education students, one of the primary themes of the IDEA is the remediation of behavioral problems, which must be clearly articulated on the IEP. Under certain circumstances, the District is required to develop a functional analysis of chronic misbehavior as well as an individually tailored behavioral intervention plan. If the disabled student possesses such a plan as part of his/her IEP, this must be reviewed prior to making a manifestation determination. When the IEP team concludes that the behavioral interventions were not adequately implemented or somehow inappropriate, the determination must be that the student's disability led to the misconduct. Under these conditions, the student may not be suspended beyond 10 days (consecutively or cumulatively).

e. Weapon and Drug-related Misconduct: The District may change a disabled student's placement by moving him/her to an interim alternative setting for 45 days if:

1. The student carries a weapon to school or to a school function;
2. The student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells/solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school functions, or
3. The student inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a function under the jurisdiction of the school district.

An interim alternative educational setting must allow the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum (regular instruction), although in a different setting. Also, the alternative placement must allow the student to continue to receive IEP services, including modifications designed to address the child's behavior. The IEP team is responsible for determining the specific setting. If parents disagree with the decision and request a due process hearing, the interim alternative setting becomes the "stay put" placement for 45 calendar days.

f. Dangerous Misconduct: A Due Process Hearing Officer may move a student to an interim alternative educational setting if the student would be substantially likely to cause injury to himself/herself or others in his/her current school placement. The District must demonstrate that school personnel have made reasonable efforts to minimize the risk of harm in the current placement. The interim alternative placement must meet all the requirements described above.

g. Students Not Eligible for Special Education: If the District had knowledge that the student possessed a disability prior to the misconduct which resulted in disciplinary action, but a decision on eligibility had not yet been completed, that student may be entitled to the due process

described above. If the District did not have knowledge that the student possessed a disability before the misconduct occurred, the school's regular disciplinary procedures will apply. If the student's parents request an evaluation following the incident, the school is required to expedite the evaluation process.

During the evaluation period, the student remains in the placement determined by the school.

5. **Presumptive Sanctions:**

The District shall refer all criminal acts to the appropriate authorities. In addition, in the absence of clear evidence showing that the application of the sanction would be inappropriate or unjust under the circumstances of a particular case, the following sanctions are presumed to be appropriate for the offenses listed below:

a. **Illegal Substances Sanctions/Banned Substances or Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug (TAD):** The following presumptive disciplinary actions will be applied to students shown to be guilty of selling or attempting to sell, delivery or attempting to deliver, possessing or attempting to possess, or being under the influence of illegal substances while under School District jurisdiction. Prescription and over-the-counter substances are subject to this provision if the school nurse does not inventory the substance and permission by the nurse is not granted for possession. Consequences for discipline should not accumulate between elementary and middle and middle and high. Consequences for TAD offenses should start over in 6th grade and again in 9th grade.

i. Under the Influence, which includes consumption or possession (owning or having control of the substance)

1. High School, Junior High, and Middle School Students:

a. First offense:

Any sanction appropriate under the circumstances with a minimum 5-day suspension up to and including a semester suspension. The length of the suspension may be mitigated if the student complies with the requirements of an education conference.

b. Second offense:

30 day up to a semester suspension from attendance. The student may enroll in the district's correspondence study school, or participate in an assigned alternative program. The length of the suspension may be mitigated if the student complies with the requirements of an education conference.

c. iii. Third offense:

A semester suspension from attendance. The student may enroll in the district's correspondence study

school or participate in an assigned alternative program. The length of the suspension may be mitigated if the student complies with the requirements of an education conference.

2. Elementary School Students

a. First offense:

Any sanction appropriate under the circumstances up to and including a 10-day suspension. The length of the suspension may be mitigated if the student complies with the requirements of an education conference.

b. Second offense:

Any sanction appropriate under the circumstances up to and including a 20-day suspension. The length of the suspension may be mitigated if the student complies with the requirements of an education conference.

c. Third offense:

Up to a semester suspension. The length of the suspension may be mitigated if the student complies with the requirements of an education conference.

ii. Delivery or Sale (Trading, Transferring, or Giving the Substance to Another)

1. High School, Junior High, and Middle School Students

Long-term suspension or expulsion and referral to law enforcement authorities

2. Elementary School Students

Long-term suspension or expulsion and referral to law enforcement authorities.

b. **Weapons:** The following minimum sanctions will be applied to students who possess weapons, unless the Board rules otherwise for good cause shown. More severe sanctions may be assessed if warranted.

i. Possession of a firearm, explosive device, or any deadly weapon that may cause death or serious injury, will result in expulsion and referral to the proper law enforcement agency.

ii. Possession without permission of:

1. a weapon or replica, which is not a firearm, explosive device, or a deadly weapon;

2. a BB gun, paintball gun, pellet gun, or any similar device which discharges a projectile through the use of compressed air or gas;
3. any electric shocking device;
4. knives of any length including box cutters.

Suspension up to thirty (30) days and referral to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Factors considered in weighing the severity of a sanction for the items noted in "i", "ii", "iii," and "iv" above include the intent of the person in possession or planned use of the item, the potential degree of danger or hazard the item may present, and the threat to student and school safety if the item accidentally left the control of the individual who brought it on campus.

- c. **Tobacco/Vapes/E-Cigarettes:** Students who smoke, use, or possess any tobacco products or paraphernalia anywhere on school property or at activities under school district jurisdiction will be subject to the following minimum sanctions:
 - i. First Offense: Up to a three (3) day suspension
 - ii. Second Offense: Up to a five (5) day suspension
 - iii. Third and later Offenses: Up to a ten (10) day suspension

All athletes are subject to TAD (Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Free) guidelines and penalties as outlined in ASAA (Alaska School Activities Association) handbook.

As an alternative to suspension, a tobacco information or cessation course, or in-school suspension, may be offered in lieu of the three, five or ten day suspension when district or grant funding permits.

- d. **Conspiring to commit offenses:** Whenever two or more students conspire or otherwise work in concert to commit an offense sanctioned under this policy, the School Board has determined that the seriousness of the offense is compounded by the concerted activity, which, in itself, is behavior that is contrary to the welfare, safety, and morals of the school community. A suspension of at least five (5) school days may be applied to any concerted offense. Suspensions of greater duration, up to and including a semester, and expulsion may be applied in the appropriate cases.
- e. **Vandalism:** In addition to any other discipline imposed upon a student who has committed an act of vandalism, the School District may require reimbursement for the cost of remedying the damage or destruction resulting from the vandalism. In group vandalism incidents, all parties may be held fully financially responsible for the damages.

- f. **Direct and Willful Insubordination:** Direct and willful insubordination is the failure to follow a staff member's reasonable request. Any student found to be insubordinate may be suspended up to and including a long-term suspension with loss of credit.
- g. **Threats of Serious Harm or Death:** Statements that threaten serious harm or death are not tolerated in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District. All such statements are taken seriously. If threats of serious harm or death are made, Behavioral Threat Management Teams will convene and follow district protocol. Disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, may be taken.
- h. **Suspensions and Expulsions from other School Districts:** The Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District will uphold suspensions and expulsions of students entering from other districts.

E. SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The following rules shall apply to the search of students, their property, and of school property assigned to them (e.g., lockers), and to the seizure of student possessions.

1. Principals or their designees may search a student or student's property for specific items if he/she has reasonable grounds for suspecting the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the School District or of the school.
2. Principals or their designees may search vehicles parked on school property if he/she has reasonable grounds for suspecting the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the School District or of the school.
3. The school administration retains control over lockers and desk space assigned to students.
4. Force should not be used in conducting a search, unless it is based on a reasonable belief that it is necessary to prevent a serious and immediate threat to the safety of anyone present within School District jurisdiction.
5. If a student refuses a legitimate search demand, disciplinary sanctions may be applied commensurate with the suspected violation.
6. Materials discovered in a search may be used in school disciplinary proceedings and may also be turned over to law enforcement officials.
7. Firearms, weapons, illegal substances, other items determined to be a threat to the safety, welfare, or security of others, and any item used to disrupt or to interfere with the educational process may be seized by school authorities. All illegal items will be delivered to law enforcement authorities. Physical evidence of a crime will also be delivered to law enforcement authorities. All legal items not given to law enforcement authorities shall, upon request, be

made available to the student's parents or guardian.

F. DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

1. Suspensions of Ten days or Less

- a. **Level One Meeting:** Before a student may be placed on a short-term suspension, the assistant principal or principal shall give the student:
 - i. Oral or written notice of the charges supporting the suspension;
 - ii. Oral or written description of the evidence known to support the charges;
 - iii. An opportunity to present an oral explanation of his/her side of the case.

If the decision is made to place the student on short-term suspension at the conclusion of the Level One Meeting, the assistant principal or principal shall give the student, upon request, written notice of the suspension, the charges supporting the suspension, a summary of the evidence known to support the charges, and an informal post suspension meeting. Notice of available appeal procedures shall be sent to the student's parents or guardian, or to the student if emancipated, within one school day of the imposition of the suspension. A principal may deny any student the opportunity in all school events until the appeal is resolved.

- b. **Level Two Meeting:** In addition to the informal hearing, the student or the student's parents or guardian may, within three school days of the initial imposition of the suspension, request a meeting with the principal.
 - i. A meeting with the principal or with the principal's designee is to occur within two school days of receipt of the request. It is not expected that this meeting will resemble a formal hearing; rather, it should provide the parents, the guardian, or the student the opportunity to discuss the disciplinary problem with the principal or designee and to explore any changes to the discipline initially imposed. The principal or designee need not allow anyone other than the student and the student's parents or guardian to attend this meeting;
 - ii. If the student, parent or guardian requests a change or termination of the suspension at the post-suspension meeting, the principal or the principal's designee must issue a decision within one school day of the meeting. A written notice of the decision must be sent to the student and parents or guardian and an attempt to communicate the decision to them orally must be made within this time period.
- c. **Level Three Meeting:** Short-term suspension and simple discipline shall not be appealed to the Superintendent or the School Board. However, in the case of an elementary school that does not have both an assistant principal and principal for an appeal; the unit administrator may contact another school principal to serve as a peer review of his/her decision for an informal appeal by the parent and student.

2. Suspensions of More than Ten Days and Expulsions

a. Notice of Disciplinary Action

- i. Written notice of a principal's recommendation to suspend a student for more than 10 school days or to recommend expulsion shall be sent by certified mail or delivered in person to the student and to the student's parents or guardian. This notice shall contain the following:
 1. The specific charges against the student and a summary of the facts known to support these charges;
 2. The recommended sanctions against the student; and
- ii. Pending implementation of the recommended suspension, the student may be placed on an interim suspension. Prior to the enactment of any interim suspension, the student shall be given the opportunity to participate in an informal hearing as described in Board Policy 5144.1. Whether or not an interim suspension is imposed, the student and parents or guardian may have a meeting with the Principal as described in Board Policy 5144.1. Those days missed from school due to an interim suspension will be subsumed within the ultimate disciplinary sanction.

b. Hearing Request

- i. If the student, parents, or guardian wish to contest the recommended disciplinary action, a written request for a hearing must be sent to the principal and to the Superintendent within five school days of receipt of the written notice of disciplinary action. The request for hearing should state:
 1. Whether a hearing is requested on the charges, on the recommended sanction, or on both;
 2. A summary of the reasons why the intended disciplinary action is considered to be inappropriate;
 3. Whether the hearing should be open or closed to the public;
 4. Whether a hearing on any emergency suspension is requested; and
 5. Whether an attorney will represent the student.
- ii. A hearing on the merits of the charges or the propriety of the recommended sanction shall be held within five school days of receipt of the request.

c. Hearing Officer

- i. The hearing authority shall be the Superintendent or designee.

d. Formal Hearing

The following procedural guidelines shall govern the hearing on the

merits of the charges and on the propriety of the recommended sanction:

- i. Parents/guardian may be present at the hearing.
- ii. The student, parents/guardian, and School District may be represented by legal counsel or other spokesperson.
- iii. The student or the student's representative shall be permitted reasonable opportunity to inspect, in advance of the hearing, all affidavits or exhibits which school authorities intend to submit at the hearing. Upon request, the student shall disclose to the hearing officer all documentary evidence which he/she intends to submit at the hearing.
- iv. The order of the hearing will be as follows:
 1. Presentation by the school of:
 - a. the offense(s) with which the student is charged;
 - b. sanction recommended and the reasons for the recommendation; and,
 - c. the facts in support of the charges and of the recommended sanction.
- v. Presentation by the student or representative.
- vi. Rebuttal by the school.
- vii. The presentations by both parties may include oral or written argument, affidavits, exhibits and such witnesses as desired.
- viii. All relevant, not unduly repetitious, evidence shall be accepted. However, written statements solicited for the purposes of the hearing must be in the form of a sworn or affirmed affidavit.
- ix. The student shall be allowed to observe all evidence offered against him/her. In addition, the student shall be allowed to question any witness present at the hearing.
- x. The hearing officer shall make his/her determination solely upon the evidence presented at the hearing.
- xi. Either a tape-recorded or verbatim record shall be made of the hearing by the School District.
- xii. Within five school days of the hearing, the hearing officer shall render his or her decision upholding, modifying in any manner, or repudiating the recommended disciplinary action. This initial decision should be communicated to the student or to the student's parents or guardian orally, if possible, and must be sent by mail within this time period. The student and the student's

parent/guardian will be mailed or otherwise provided with a complete written decision, including supporting findings of fact, within five school days of the hearing (with a copy to the school principal).

- xiii. If the decision to suspend the student is upheld, the sanction shall take effect immediately. If a recommended expulsion is approved, the matter will be referred to the School Board for final action.

e. Appeal to the School Board

- i. The student, the parents, or the guardian shall have five school days after receipt of the hearing officer's complete written decision to appeal the decision to the School Board by delivering a written appeal request to the Superintendent. The appeal request should state the relief requested from the School Board and a summary of the reasons why the School Board should act as requested.
- ii. If an appeal is requested, the imposition of the sanction may be stayed by the hearing officer or by the School Board until the appeal is decided. If the student is on interim suspension, the suspension may continue until a final determination is rendered. However, the student may request that the hearing officer or the School Board relieve him or her of interim suspension pending a decision on the appeal.
- iii. The following procedural guidelines shall govern an appeal to the School Board.
 1. The School Board will schedule and hold a meeting to review the appeal at the next school Board meeting that is more than 10 days from the time of the receipt of the appeal request. All materials considered by the hearing officer and the written decision from the hearing officer will be provided to the Board prior to the hearing.
 2. At that time, the student, the student's parents/guardian and his/her attorney or other spokesperson, and the district's representative shall have the right to present oral and/or written argument and any new, relevant evidence not available at the time of the original hearing. If substantive new facts are brought forward that were unavailable at the time of the original hearing, the Board may direct the parents and student back to the school principal for further review prior to any hearing by the Board.
 3. The school principal shall have a right to respond to/refute any new oral/written arguments.
 4. The basis of the Board's decision shall be the following:

- a. Did the student get to tell his/her side of the story after being presented with the basis of the allegation?
 - b. Was the school's understanding of the facts correct?
 - c. Was the disciplinary sanction within the scope of what is set forth in Board policy?
5. Prior to adjournment, the School Board shall make its decision known or agree to:
- a. study the hearing record or other materials and report its decision within five school days; or
 - b. schedule and hold a special meeting to hear further evidence or arguments on that case and report its findings and decisions within ten school days; or
 - c. Return the case to the school principal for further review.

3. **Time Deadlines, Waiver:**

If the student, parents, or guardian fail to make a timely and appropriate request for any hearing, meeting, or appeal, it shall be deemed they have waived their right to any further review of the sanction. However, discretionary review, under Board Policy 5144.1, shall always be available. Furthermore, the parties may agree to modify any time period required by these procedures.

4. **Discretionary Review:**

Under no circumstances shall either a suspension or an expulsion prevent a student from making an application for readmission prior to the termination of imposed sanctions. Applications for readmission shall be given to the Superintendent. Such applications must outline all the facts, which support the conclusion that the cause for the disciplinary action has been adequately remedied, or that there exists some other compelling reason to suspend the effect of the disciplinary action. Applications for readmission after an expulsion may be decided by the School Board without a formal hearing. Applications for readmission after a suspension may be decided by the Superintendent in consultation with the school principal.

G. **DEFINITIONS:**

The underlined words or phrases below are employed in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy with the following meanings.

1. **Assault:** Assault is unjustified intentional conduct by a student toward another person which causes offensive bodily contact, physical harm, or physical restraint or which, together with the apparent means of accomplishing it, threatens physical harm.

2. **Cyber-Bullying:** includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another student or staff member by use of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory social media postings, email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings which have the effect of:
 - a. Physically, emotionally, or mentally harming a student or staff member, or;
 - b. Placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of physical, emotional, or mental harm;
 - c. Placing a student or staff member in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property;
 - d. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities; or
 - e. Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.
3. **Delivery:** When used in connection with the phrase "illegal substance", the term "delivery" means giving an illegal substance to another person; however, the term does not include surrender of an illegal substance to law enforcement or school officials or to others in positions of authority.
4. **Illegal Substances:** The term "illegal substances" includes all alcoholic beverages and all drugs and other controlled substances by AS 11.71.010-070 and AS 11.73.010.
5. **Libel:** Libel is a false statement which is, or may be, injurious to a person's reputation and which is communicated to another person in writing or by some other form of publication.
6. **Obscenity:** is matter which (1) taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest of an average person, applying contemporary community standards, and/or (2) portrays sexual conduct, excretory functions, or sexual organs in a patently offensive way, and (3) lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.
7. **Principal:** The term "principal" is used to mean the chief administrative official of a school.
8. **Publications:** Publications include any written, printed, painted, drawn, or photographic matter.
9. **School Board/Board of Education:** Matanuska-Susitna Borough School Board.
10. **School Days:** For purposes of time periods stated in the Students Rights and Responsibilities Policy, the phrase "school days" includes all days on which

school is actually in session for students and all weekdays during the students' summer vacation, excepting state and federal holidays.

11. **School District:** Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District.
12. **School District Jurisdiction:** The term "school district jurisdiction" means the extent, in terms of time, space, and subject matter, of the School District's authority to control the behavior of students. Students are subject to the rules and regulations of the School District whenever they are present:
 - a. on school grounds;
 - b. in a school building;
 - c. on school buses traveling to and from school;
 - d. on any form of transportation provided at School District expense;
 - e. at school sponsored on-campus events;
 - f. at school sponsored off-campus events; or
 - g. at activities sponsored by the Alaska School Activities Association.
13. **Superintendent:** Superintendent of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District.
14. **Vandalism:** Vandalism includes intentional, willful, knowing, and reckless damage to or destruction of property owned, held, or used by the School District. Graffiti is a form of vandalism. Acts of vandalism deprive students of the use and enjoyment of valuable educational resources. Vandalism adds to the costs the community must bear in providing educational opportunities to all students. Vandalism also includes taking School District property without permission, whether or not its return is intended, and it includes negligent damage to, or destruction of, property so taken. Vandalism in all forms is prohibited.
15. **Weapon:** The term "weapon" includes two types of weapons: deadly weapons and defensive weapons. The phrase "deadly weapon" means any firearm, or any other thing designed for and capable of causing death or serious physical injury, including a knife, an ax, a club, metal knuckles, or an explosive, pressurized, or spring-loaded device. This definition applies to the use of other objects to cause death or serious physical injury. The phrase "defensive weapon" means any electric stun gun, or a device to dispense mace or a similar chemical agent, that is not designed to cause death or serious physical injury. For purposes of this prohibition, pocketknives and other sharp tools may be deemed to be weapons.

MATANUSKA SUSITNA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
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