

# Student Handbook 2024-2025



# MERIDIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

MR. TODD TORGESON, PRINCIPAL

MS. JILL HAMMACK, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

MRS. KATHY GRESHOCK & MR. BRETT MUSKAVAGE, COUNSELORS

This handbook belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Homeroom Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

# MERIDIAN SCHOOL DISTRICT VISION

In Meridian, we empower all learners to thrive academically, socially and emotionally as valued members of our local and global communities.

## MERIDIAN SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITMENTS

### BELONGING



Meridian strives to be a welcoming place where understanding and respect are priorities. Everyone will be honored, valued and heard.

- Learners experience a community that embraces and honors who they are.
- Everyone sees themselves represented in their educational environment.
- All voices are invited, heard and empowered.

### COMMUNICATION



Meridian commits to proactive, consistent and clear two-way communication that is accessible for all.

- Open communication is encouraged and valued between staff, students and our community.
- Clear, consistent communication from all levels of the district supports student learning.
- Students and families are informed so they can be involved and engaged in school.

### SUPPORT



Meridian works in partnership with staff, families, students and community to nurture success in each and every student.

- Each learner has access to support systems and partnerships that meet their individual needs.
- Students engage in their own progress using self-assessment and goal setting.
- Every learner is included as an active partner when determining their level of support.

### WELLNESS



Meridian creates an environment that supports staff and students' physical, social and emotional well-being.

- Members of our learning community feel physically, emotionally and academically safe at school.
- Learners are supported in developing their health and wellness.
- Students are taught strategies for emotional regulation and problem-solving.

### LEARNING



Meridian is guided by a commitment to equitable education that develops academic and personal skills for life.

- Our youngest learners benefit from an inclusive and robust early childhood education.
- Each learner has access to rigorous grade-level instruction designed to meet their unique needs.
- All students make measurable growth toward meeting or exceeding proficiency on grade-level standards each year.
- Meridian graduates are prepared for their career and life goals.

# BASIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

LOCATION & PHONE	SCHOOL HOURS
861 Ten Mile Road Lynden, Washington 98264  Phone: 360-398-2291	School Begins: 8:05am School Ends: 2:45pm Office Hours: 7:30am to 3:30pm

# OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME	ROLE	EMAIL
Mr. Todd Torgeson	Principal	ttorgeson@meridian.wednet.edu
Ms. Jill Hammack	Assistant Principal	jhammack@meridian.wednet.edu
Mrs. Kathy Greshock	Counselor	kgreshock@meridian.wednet.edu
Mr. Brett Muskavage	Counselor	bmuskavage@meridian.wednet.edu
Mrs. Tracy Brackinreed	Head Secretary	tbrackinreed@meridian.wednet.edu
Mrs. Nicole Heinrich	Attendance Secretary	nheinrich@meridian.wednet.edu
Mrs. Ashley Hoelzle	Secretary	ahoelzle@meridian.wednet.edu
Mrs. Brenda Aamot	Nurse Assistant	baamot@meridian.wednet.edu

CONCERN AREA	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
Academic Progress	Individual Teachers or Mrs. Greshock or Mr. Muskavage, Counselors
Attendance Concerns	Mr. Torgeson, Principal
Attendance Reporting	Mrs. Heinrich, Attendance Secretary
Behavior / Discipline	Mr. Torgeson, Principal
Friendship / Relational Concerns	Mrs. Greshock or Mr. Muskavage, Counselors
Illness / Injury / Medication	Mrs. Aamot, Health Services Assistant
Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, Science	Individual Teachers or Ms. Hammack, Asst. Principal
Electives, Special Education	Individual Teachers or Mr. Torgeson, Principal
Sports & Athletics	Mrs. Brackinreed, Head Secretary
Student Mental Health	Mrs. Greshock or Mr. Muskavage, Counselors
Student Schedules	Mrs. Greshock or Mr. Muskavage, Counselors or Ms. Hammack, Asst. Principal

# REGULAR BELL SCHEDULES

PERIOD	MONDAY-THURSDAY	LATE START FRIDAY
1st (Homeroom)	8:05-8:35	Does Not Meet
2nd	8:40-9:31	9:05-9:51
3rd	9:36-10:27	9:56-10:42
4th	10:32-11:23	10:47-11:33
5th	11:28-12:53	11:38-1:03
6th	12:58-1:49	1:08-1:54
7th	1:54-2:45	1:59-2:45

# LUNCH TIMES

GRADE	MONDAY-THURSDAY	LATE START FRIDAY
6th Grade	12:23-12:53 (3rd Lunch)	12:33-1:03 (3rd Lunch)
7th Grade	11:23-11:53 (1st Lunch)	11:33-12:03 (1st Lunch)
8th Grade	11:53-12:23 (2nd Lunch)	12:03-12:33 (2nd Lunch)

# SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST

GENERAL SUPPLIES	CLASS-SPECIFIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pencils (24+)</li> <li>• Pink Eraser (3+)</li> <li>• Pens (6+) - black and/or blue</li> <li>• Ultra-Fine Sharpies - black (3+)</li> <li>• Highlighter (3+)</li> <li>• Whiteboard Markers (1 pack)</li> <li>• College ruled paper pack</li> <li>• Glue sticks (3+)</li> <li>• Colored pencils (24 pack)</li> <li>• Scissors (1 pair)</li> <li>• Handheld pencil sharpener (1)</li> <li>• Pencil Pouch (1)</li> <li>• Composition Journals (4-6)</li> <li>• 8 ½" x 11" Graph Paper Journal (1)</li> <li>• Ruler (1)</li> <li>• Lock - Key or Combination</li> <li>• 2" Binder &amp; Subject Dividers or Accordion Portfolio</li> </ul>	<p>Physical Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletic shoes (no crocs/boots/sandals)</li> <li>• Shorts or Sweats</li> <li>• T-shirt and sweatshirt for cooler days</li> </ul> <p>Choir:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Binder - 1" rings</li> </ul> <p>Art:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Folder with pockets</li> </ul>
	<p><b>PLEASE NOTE</b></p> <p>Students will need to bring these items with them to school each day. If your family is having trouble getting the listed supplies, please check in with a counselor for assistance. Keep in mind that supplies will often get used up, lost, or broken during the course of the year and may need to be replenished from time-to-time.</p>

Reminder - the State of Washington requires that all students must have the TDAP booster shot prior to entering 7th grade. If you have questions, please reach out to our nurse assistant, Mrs. Aamot at [baamot@meridian.wednet.edu](mailto:baamot@meridian.wednet.edu) or 360-398-2291.

# ASSOCIATED STUDENT BODY & STUDENT GOVERNMENT

OFFICERS	PURPOSE
President - Tucker Siadal Vice President - Liam Koning Treasurer - Jesus Flores Secretary - Jaydelin Hill Advisor - Mrs. G	Each Meridian Middle School student is a member of the Associated Student Body (ASB). The council is composed of the elected ASB officers and representatives in leadership class. They will meet on a regular basis to design and promote positive school culture and spirit.

## ATHLETIC OPPORTUNITIES\*

FALL SEASON	WINTER SEASON 1	WINTER SEASON 2	SPRING SEASON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boys Soccer</li> <li>Fastpitch</li> <li>Football</li> <li>Cross Country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls Basketball</li> <li>Boys Basketball</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wrestling</li> <li>Volleyball</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baseball</li> <li>Girls Soccer</li> <li>Track</li> </ul>

\*school athletics are for 7th and 8th grade students only

## DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES

The following are the specific disciplinary offenses that will be enforced if violated. Please be aware that engaging in any of the following behaviors will result in consequences, potentially including loss of privileges, detention, or suspension. Consequences and restorative solutions will be at the discretion of school administration.

MINOR / LOW	MODERATE / MAJOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Dishonesty</li> <li>Aggressive Behavior*</li> <li>Defiance</li> <li>Destruction of Property*</li> <li>Disrespect</li> <li>Disruptive Conduct*</li> <li>Dress Code</li> <li>Forgery</li> <li>Inappropriate Language*</li> <li>Lying</li> <li>Physical Contact</li> <li>Property Misuse</li> </ul> <p>*These types of behaviors may rise to the level of MODERATE/MAJOR depending on the context and severity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alcohol</li> <li>Arson</li> <li>Assault</li> <li>Assault of Teacher</li> <li>Bullying</li> <li>Discriminatory Harassment</li> <li>Fighting</li> <li>Firearm</li> <li>Gang Intimidation or Activity</li> <li>Illicit Drug Possession, Distribution, or Use</li> <li>Insubordination</li> <li>Left Campus without Permission</li> <li>Possession of Weapon</li> <li>Robbery</li> <li>Safety Issue</li> <li>Sexual Assault</li> <li>Sexual Harassment</li> <li>Sexually Inappropriate Conduct</li> <li>Skipping Class</li> <li>Theft</li> <li>Threats / Intimidation</li> <li>Tobacco Possession, Distribution, or Use</li> </ul>

# THE MERIDIAN MINDSET

In Meridian, all students, staff, and families are valued members of our school community. As a community, the Meridian Mindsets were developed to showcase our aspirations for how our community approaches challenges, interacts with each other, and strives to engage each day.

Members of our school community aspire to be...

## **Caring**

Refers to demonstrating concern and compassion for others, and taking actions to support their well-being. Being caring involves demonstrating kindness and empathy towards classmates, teachers, and staff.

## **Courageous**

Refers to being brave and willing to take risks, even in the face of adversity or uncertainty. Being courageous involves speaking up for oneself or others, and taking on new challenges with determination and perseverance.

## **Trustworthy**

Refers to being reliable, responsible, and truthful in all interactions with others. Being trustworthy involves following through on commitments, being honest in communication, and respecting the confidentiality of others.

## **Open-Minded**

Refers to being receptive to new ideas and perspectives, and willing to consider different viewpoints. Being open-minded involves actively listening to others and being willing to learn from them, even if their ideas differ from one's own.

*Learning  thrives here*

# BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

All members of the Meridian Middle School community - staff, students, parents, and guests – must work together to create a positive environment where all students can achieve at the highest levels. Below are the expectations for student behavior while at school. All community members share the responsibility of ensuring these expectations are met.

	<b>EXPECTATION</b>
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Remain on campus during the school day</li> <li>● Remain only in designated student areas               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Off Limits:                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Baseball Fields &amp; Track (unless during PE)</li> <li>■ Parking Areas &amp; Other Staff-Only Areas</li> <li>■ Area between Art Classroom &amp; Ten Mile Road</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Have pre-arranged adult supervision from parents or staff to stay after school</li> </ul>
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Arrive to class on time</li> <li>● Give your best effort and have a growth mindset</li> <li>● Ask for help from peers or staff when needed</li> <li>● Complete assigned work yourself</li> <li>● Complete all assignments by the due date</li> <li>● Bring only water to drink and do not eat food</li> </ul>
Bathroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Go to the bathroom only if you need to use it</li> <li>● Go directly back to class when finished</li> <li>● Keep bathroom clean and use trash bins</li> </ul>
Hallways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Keep pace at a walking speed</li> <li>● Continue moving during transition times; help reduce crowding</li> <li>● Use a hall pass when out of class during instruction time</li> <li>● Go directly to and from your destination when using hallway during class time</li> <li>● Use quiet voices when working in the hallway during class time</li> <li>● Arrive to class by the time the bell rings during transitions</li> </ul>
Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Keep your supplies stocked following the supply list</li> <li>● Bring all needed supplies to class each day</li> <li>● Use only your own belongings, unless given specific permission</li> </ul>
Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Remain seated at tables while you're in the cafeteria</li> <li>● Clean up any trays, trash, or spills</li> <li>● Use trash and/or compost bins</li> <li>● Ask for a paper tray if you're going to spend lunch with a staff member</li> <li>● Talk in a voice loud enough for only your table group to hear you</li> </ul>
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Check out and return equipment to office</li> <li>● Let supervisors know of any concerning behavior, incidents, or serious disagreements</li> <li>● Keep the field clean and use trash bins</li> <li>● Remain visible to supervisors while on the field</li> <li>● Stay behind the yellow line during lunch time</li> </ul>
Locker Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Place sports gear in locker room between 7:55 and 8:05 before school</li> <li>● Only enter locker room if you are changing before or after your PE class</li> <li>● Only store items in your PE locker that you won't need during the day</li> <li>● Keep the locker room clean and use trash bins</li> <li>● Cologne, deodorant, and body sprays are only allowed in the locker room after PE</li> </ul>

<b>Personal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Follow staff directions</li><li>● Keep hands and body to yourself</li><li>● Use respectful, positive, and appropriate language</li><li>● Treat everyone with kindness</li><li>● Wear clothing defined as appropriate in board policy (see below)</li><li>● Eat food before school, during passing, at lunch, and after school</li><li>● Hallways, bathrooms, and locker rooms are food-free at all times</li><li>● Classrooms are food-free unless working with a staff member during lunch</li></ul>
<b>Electronics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Personal phones:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ classrooms, bathroom, and locker rooms are phone-free zones</li><li>○ prior to entering a phone-free zone, phones must be placed in backpacks (not pockets)</li><li>○ must be used in a manner that follows school rules</li><li>○ <i>see Meridian School District Phone Expectations on page 9</i></li></ul></li><li>● School Devices (Chromebooks):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ may only be used to access sites designated by teachers</li><li>○ are monitored by staff and administration (even at home!)</li></ul></li></ul>



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTION	ANSWER
What should I know about riding the bus?	Bus drivers will provide riders with an explanation of rules on the bus. In general, the same rules that apply at school apply on the bus. If your conduct on the bus is inappropriate or disruptive, you may face discipline at school and/or removal from bus service. Information on bus routes and pick-up times can be found online on the <a href="#">Transportation Department website</a> .
What time can I get to school? What time do I have to leave?	Doors open at 7:55am. You will need to wait in the courtyard between the main building and the cafeteria if you arrive before doors open. You can also go to the cafeteria for breakfast. Once doors open, plan to head to your first class to get ready for the day. All students must be off campus by 3:00pm unless they are being directly supervised by a staff member.
What if I'm going to be late to school?	We expect all students to arrive at school on time. There may be times when you have an appointment or other family circumstance that prevents you from being here when school begins. In those cases, your guardian would need to contact the office to excuse your tardy arrival. Traffic or oversleeping are not excused reasons for tardy. If no reason is provided, the tardy will be considered unexcused. If your tardiness happens frequently, we will help problem-solve with you and your guardian.  When you get to school late, you'll need to check in at the office before heading to class.
What are the expectations for my behavior at school?	Meridian Middle School believes in creating an environment where all students can learn and be their best selves. Please see the "Behavioral Expectations" and "Disciplinary Offenses" sections of the handbook for more information on what is expected of you at school.
What if I don't meet behavioral expectations at school?	Mr. Torgeson (Principal) and the counselors (Mrs. Greshock and Mr. Muskavage) work with students who don't meet behavioral expectations at school. Our goal is to use behavioral violations as an opportunity to reteach expectations, practice what students should do next time a given situation occurs, and to help students make amends for any wrongs they may have visited upon others.
Does MMS have a dress code?	Yes, we do! Our dress code is designed to help you make good choices about the clothing you choose to wear to school. In short, you can't wear anything that is a health or safety concern, that will disrupt the education of yourself or others, or that features inappropriate messages, language or topics. We also require all clothing to fully cover buttocks, chest/torso, and underwear. Hats and hoods are allowed so long as they don't violate the above guidelines. For more information, please see the "Dress Code" policy included in this handbook.
Can my parent(s) or guardian(s) visit the school?	Yes! All visitors are required to report to the office and wear a visitor badge while on campus. Parents who wish to volunteer must fill out a volunteer form. Visits to a classroom during the school day, other than approved volunteers, need approval from the teacher and the administration. Non-MMS students are not allowed on campus.
How can I sign up to play school sports?	Sign ups happen online through "Final Forms". You must be a 7th or 8th grader to be eligible to play school sports. See the "Athletic Opportunities" section for specifics on which sports are offered at MMS.
How do I report an absence?	Your parents need to contact the school to have your absence excused. There are three ways to do this: 1) call the main office at 360-398-2291, 2) email our Attendance Secretary Mrs. Heinrich at <a href="mailto:nheinrich@meridian.wednet.edu">nheinrich@meridian.wednet.edu</a> , or 3) bring in a note when you return to school. Please make sure your parent includes your full name, grade level, the date of the absence, and the reason for the absence when contacting the school.
What if I lose something at school?	In general, the school is not responsible for lost items. Belongings that are found at school will be placed in the lost and found area between the Main Office and entry foyer. Students who have lost items may look for them there. This area will be periodically emptied and donated, so be sure to check as soon as possible.
Can I use my personal cell phone at school?	Student cell phones are not permitted to be used during class time by district policy. Students are able to use their phones before the start of school at 8:05, during passing time between classes, at lunch, and after the end of the day at 2:45. Student phones may be confiscated if they are being used during class time.
What if I need to get ahold of a parent or guardian during the day?	Students may ask to use classroom phones or place a call from the office to listed parents or guardians or emergency contacts. Students may not use school phones without permission.
What if my parent(s) or guardian(s) needs to contact me during the school day?	Parents can contact the office to leave a message for their student. We will do our best to relay messages to students during the course of their school day, but it can be challenging, especially if the messages come within the last hour of the day. We encourage families to communicate their after-school plans to their child prior to the start of the day to minimize the use of our office staff for this purpose.
What can I do during lunch? How long is it?	Lunch is 30 minutes long and occurs in the middle of the school day. You can be in the cafeteria, covered area, or on the east field during lunch. You may use playground equipment or just spend time with friends.
What does dismissal look like at the end of the day?	If you're riding the bus, you will report to one of two places depending on where your bus is in the lineup - either the courtyard between the main building and the cafeteria or the new gym. Once buses arrive, you'll be allowed to board the correct bus. If you're being picked up, you'll need to report to the new gym to wait until buses leave. See the map and instructions on dismissal.



# MERIDIAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Phone Expectations 2024-2025

### **GENERAL RULES**

Classrooms, bathrooms, and locker rooms are phone-free zones at all times.

Phones may be used in hallways, cafeteria, and other common spaces before school, during lunch or passing time between classes, and after school.

Prior to crossing the threshold of a phone-free zone, students must place their phones in their backpacks (not pockets).

### **CLASSROOM CONFISCATION PROCEDURE**

If a staff member sees a student's phone in a phone-free zone - it will be confiscated and held for the remainder of that class period. At the end of that period, the student will sign that they received their phone back.

If a student's phone is to be confiscated a second time in the same class period in an academic week, the phone will be turned in to the office by the staff member to be held for the remainder of that day.

### **OFFICE CONFISCATION PROCEDURE**

The first and second times a phone is turned in at the office by a staff member, the parent will be notified and the phone will be returned to the student at the end of the day.

The third time and successive times a phone is turned in at the office by a staff member, the parent will be notified and required to come pick up the device at their convenience.

The count will reset at the semester change.

# STUDENT DROP-OFF

## BEFORE SCHOOL

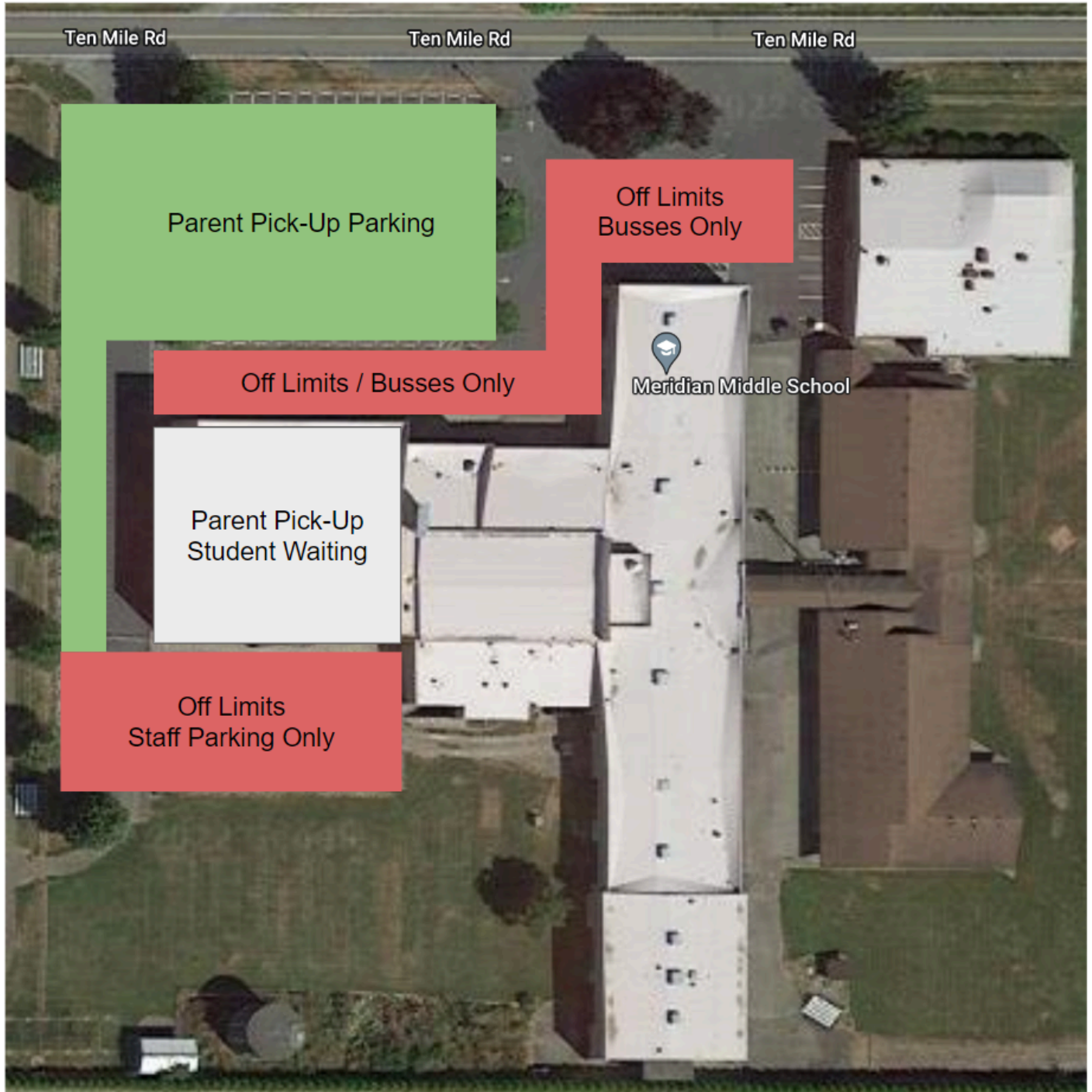
- As you arrive for drop off, please pull into the yellow zone to wait. Do not drop off students in that area. Use the green zone for a quick stop for students to exit the car. If you need a longer time for your student to collect their things or to say goodbye, park in the lot so as not to block the drop-off zone. Do not drive in the red zone or drop students off along the roadside.
- Any students who arrive before 7:55 will need to enter the courtyard through the open gate and wait in the gray zone "Student Waiting Area" between the cafeteria and main building until doors open at 7:55. Students who arrive after 7:55 will still need to enter through the courtyard until school begins at 8:05, when they may use the main entry foyer doors.



# STUDENT PICK-UP

## AFTER SCHOOL

- As guardians arrive to pick up students, we ask that you find a place to park in the green zone on the map below, and do not drive or park in the red zones (bus loop and staff parking).
- At 2:45 (end of day), all students who are being picked up will report to the big gym.
- Once the buses have loaded and departed, students being picked-up will be released to walk through the parking lot to find their guardian's car. You may leave as soon as your student arrives to your car. Please drive cautiously and watch for other students as you leave.



# SELECTED DISTRICT POLICIES\*

## NON-DISCRIMINATION

Board [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) 3210

The district will provide equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities program without discrimination based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The district will provide equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. District programs will be free from sexual harassment. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Conduct against any student that is based on one of the categories listed above that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive as to limit or deny the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the district's course offerings; educational programming or any activity will not be tolerated. When a district employee knows, or reasonably should know, that such discriminatory harassment is occurring or has occurred, the district will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, prevent its recurrence and remedy its effects.

Title IX and Compliance Coordinator: Kurt Harvill, [kharvill@meridian.wednet.edu](mailto:kharvill@meridian.wednet.edu)  
Section 504 questions and complaints: Aaron Jacoby, [ajacoby@meridian.wednet.edu](mailto:ajacoby@meridian.wednet.edu)

*Please review the full policy and procedure on the district website for more information.*

## GENDER-INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

Board [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) 3211

The board believes in fostering an educational environment that is safe and free of discrimination for all students, regardless of gender expression, gender identity, or sex. To that end, the board recognizes the importance of an inclusive approach toward transgender and gender-expansive students with regard to key terms, communication and the use of names and pronouns, student records, confidential health and education information, communication, restroom and locker room use and accessibility, sports and physical education, dress codes, and other school activities, in order to provide these students with an equal opportunity for learning and achievement.

*Please review the full policy and procedure on the district website for more information.*

## STUDENT DRESS

Board [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) 3224

Students' choice in dress should be made in consultation with parents.

Student dress will be allowed as long as it does not:

- Create a health or safety hazard;
- Indicate membership in a gang or hate group;
- Damage school property;
- Demonstrate inconsistency with the mission of the school district; or
- Include lewd, sexual, drug, tobacco, or alcohol-related messages.

*Please review the full policy and procedure on the district website for more information.*

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Board [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) 3205

The district is committed to a positive and productive education free from discrimination, including sexual harassment. This commitment extends to all students involved in academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs or activities of the school, whether that program or activity is in a school facility, on school transportation or at a class or school training held elsewhere.

For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment means unwelcome conduct or communication of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can occur adult to student, student to student or can be carried out by a group of students or adults and will be investigated by the District even if the alleged harasser is not a part of the school staff or student body. The district prohibits sexual harassment of students by other students, employees, or third parties involved in school district activities.

A "hostile environment" has been created for a student when sexual harassment is sufficiently serious to interfere with or limit the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's program. The more severe the conduct, the less need there is to demonstrate a repetitive series of incidents. In fact, a single or isolated incident of sexual harassment may create a hostile environment if the incident is sufficiently severe, violent, or egregious.

*Please review the full policy and procedure on the district website for more information.*

## **STUDENT TELECOMMUNICATION DEVICES**

Board [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) 3245

Student phones may be turned on and used only before school, after school, and during the student's lunch break.

Phones cannot be used to cheat or engage in academic dishonesty or violate the privacy rights of others. They also cannot be used to show explicit content while at school, on school district property, or in school district vehicles.

Phones may be confiscated if they violate the above or any school rule.

*Please review the full policy and procedure on the district website for more information.*

## **STUDENT PRIVACY & SEARCHES**

Board [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) 3230

Personal privacy is a fundamental aspect of individual liberty. All students possess the constitutional right to be secure in their persons, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures. Staff will take particular care to respect students' privacy.

School officials have authority to maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect students from exposure to illegal drugs, weapons, and contraband. The superintendent, the principal, and other staff designated by the superintendent have the authority to conduct reasonable searches on school property in accordance with the law.

Lockers, desks, and storage areas are the property of the school district. Accordingly, students have no expectation of privacy in the lockers, desks, and storage areas they use or are assigned.

Because students have no expectation of privacy in their lockers, desks, and storage areas, principals or principals' designees may search all student lockers, desks, or storage areas at any time without prior notice and without reasonable suspicion that the search will yield evidence of any particular student's violation of the law or school rule.

*Please review the full policy and procedure on the district website for more information.*

## **EXCUSED & UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

### Board [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) 3122

Regular school attendance is necessary for mastery of the educational program provided to students of the district. At times, students may be absent from class or not able to participate remotely. School staff will keep a record of absence and tardiness, including a record of excuse statements submitted by a parent/guardian, or in certain cases, students, to document a student's excused absences. The following principles will govern the development and administration of attendance procedures within the district:

Absences due to the following reasons are excused:

1. Physical health or mental health symptoms, illness, health condition or medical appointment for the student or person for whom the student is legally responsible. Examples of symptoms, illness, health conditions, or medical appointments include, but are not limited to, medical, counseling, mental health wellness, dental, optometry, pregnancy, and behavioral health treatment (which can include in-patient or out-patient treatment for chemical dependency or mental health);
2. Family emergency including, but not limited to, a death or illness in the family;
3. Religious or cultural purpose including observance of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction;
4. Court, judicial proceeding, court-ordered activity, or jury service;
5. Post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview;
6. State-recognized search and rescue activities consistent with RCW 28A.225.055;
7. Absence directly related to the student's homeless or foster care/dependency status;
8. Absences related to deployment activities of a parent or legal guardian who is an active duty member consistent with RCW 28A.705.010;
9. Absences due to suspensions, expulsions or emergency expulsions imposed pursuant to chapter 392-400 WAC if the student is not receiving educational services and is not enrolled in qualifying "course of study" activities as defined in WAC 392-121-107;
10. Absences due to student safety concerns, including absences related to threats, assaults, or bullying;
11. Absences due to a student's migrant status; and
12. An approved activity that is consistent with district policy and is mutually agreed upon by the principal or designee and a parent, guardian, or emancipated youth;
13. Absences due to the student's lack of necessary instructional tools, including internet access or connectivity.

*Please review the full policy and procedure on the district website for more information.*

## **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

### Board [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) 3220

The free expression of student opinion is an important part of education in a democratic society. The district encourages students' verbal and written expression of opinion on school premises so long as it does not substantially disrupt the operation of the school or otherwise violate this policy. Students are expressly prohibited from the use of vulgar and/or offensive terms in classroom or assembly settings.

*Please review the full policy and procedure on the district website for more information.*

## USE OF TOBACCO AND NICOTINE SUBSTANCES

Board [Policy 4215](#)

The board of directors recognizes that to protect students from exposure to the addictive substance of nicotine, employees and officers of the school district, and all members of the community, have an obligation as role models to refrain from use of tobacco products and delivery devices on school property at all times. Tobacco products and delivery devices include, but are not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, snuff, smoking tobacco, smokeless tobacco, nicotine, electronic smoking/vapor devices, and vapor products, non-prescribed inhalers, nicotine delivery devices or chemicals that are not FDA-approved to help people quit using tobacco, devices that produce the same flavor or physical effect of nicotine substances and any other smoking equipment, device, material or innovation.

Any use of such products and delivery devices by staff, students, visitors and community members will be prohibited on all school district property, including all district buildings, grounds and district-owned vehicles, and within five hundred feet of schools. Possession by or distribution of tobacco products to any person under twenty-one years of age is prohibited.

*Please review the full policy on the district website for more information.*

## PROHIBITION OF HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, & BULLYING

Board [Policy and Procedure 3207](#)

The board is committed to a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, parents/legal guardians, volunteers, and community members that is free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying. As defined in legislation, "Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means any intentionally written message or image — including those that are electronically transmitted — verbal, or physical act, including but not limited to one shown to be motivated by any characteristic in RCW 28A.640.010 and 28A 642.010, or other distinguishing characteristics, when an act:

1. Physically harms a student or damages the student's property;
2. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education;
3. Is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
4. Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

This policy recognizes that 'harassment,' 'imitation,' and 'bullying' are separate but related behaviors. Each must be addressed appropriately." Nothing in this section requires the affected student to actually possess a characteristic that is a basis for the harassment, intimidation or bullying.

*Please review the full policy and procedure on the district website for more information.*

\*The full listing and text of all policies and procedures can be viewed [on the district website](#).

Schools are meant to be safe and inclusive environments where all students are protected from Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB), including in the classroom, on the school bus, in school sports, and during other school activities. This section defines HIB, explains what to do when you see or experience it, and our school's process for responding to it.

### What is HIB?

HIB is any intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act of a student that:

- Physically harms another student or damages their property;
- Has the effect of greatly interfering with another student's education; or,
- Is so severe, persistent, or significant that it creates an intimidating or threatening education environment for other students.

HIB generally involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. HIB is not allowed, by law, in our schools.



## How can I make a report or complaint about HIB?

Talk to **any school staff member** (consider starting with whoever you are most comfortable with!). You may use our district's reporting form to share concerns about HIB (<https://meridian-wa.safeschoolsalert.com/>) but reports about HIB can be made in writing or verbally. Your report can be made anonymously, if you are uncomfortable revealing your identity, or confidentially if you prefer it not be shared with other students involved with the report. No disciplinary action will be taken against another student based **solely** on an anonymous or confidential report. You may also visit our district safety page for more information at (<https://www.meridian.wednet.edu/families-and-students/school-day-information/school-safety/>).

If a staff member is notified of, observes, overhears, or otherwise witnesses HIB, they must take prompt and appropriate action to stop the HIB behavior and to prevent it from happening again. Our district also has a HIB Compliance Officer (Assistant Superintendent Kurt Harvill, [kharvill@meridian.wednet.edu](mailto:kharvill@meridian.wednet.edu), 360-398-2111) that supports prevention and response to HIB.

## What happens after I make a report about HIB?

If you report HIB, school staff must attempt to resolve the concerns. If the concerns are resolved, then no further action may be necessary. However, if you feel that you or someone you know is the victim of unresolved, severe, or persistent HIB that requires further investigation and action, then you should request an official HIB investigation.

Also, the school must take actions to ensure that those who report HIB don't experience retaliation.

## What is the investigation process?

When you report a complaint, the HIB Compliance Officer or staff member leading the investigation must notify the families of the students involved with the complaint and must make sure a prompt and thorough investigation takes place. The investigation must be completed within 5 school days, unless you agree on a different timeline. If your complaint involves circumstances that require a longer investigation, the district will notify you with the anticipated date for their response.

When the investigation is complete, the HIB Compliance Officer or the staff member leading the investigation must provide you with the outcomes of the investigation within 2 school days. This response should include:

- A summary of the results of the investigation
- A determination of whether the HIB is substantiated
- Any corrective measures or remedies needed
- Clear information about how you can appeal the decision

## What are the next steps if I disagree with the outcome?

**For the student designated as the "targeted student" in a complaint:**

If you do not agree with the school district's decision, you may appeal the decision and include any additional information regarding the complaint to the superintendent, or the person assigned to lead the appeal, and then to the school board.

**For the student designated as the "aggressor" in a complaint:**

A student found to be an "aggressor" in a HIB complaint may not appeal the decision of a HIB investigation. They can, however, appeal corrective actions that result from the findings of the HIB investigation.

For more information about the HIB complaint process, including important timelines, please see the district's *HIB Policy [3207]* and *Procedure [3207P]*.

## Our School Stands Against Discrimination

Discrimination can happen when someone is treated differently or unfairly because they are part of a **protected class**, including their race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, creed, disability, use of a service animal, or veteran or military status.

## What is discriminatory harassment?

Discriminatory harassment can include teasing and name-calling; graphic and written statements; or other conduct that may be physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating. Discriminatory harassment happens when the conduct is based on a student's protected class and is serious enough to create a hostile environment. A **hostile environment** is created when conduct is so severe, pervasive, or persistent that it limits a student's ability to participate in, or benefit from, the school's services, activities, or opportunities.

*To review the district's Nondiscrimination Policy [3210] and Procedure [3210P], visit [\[https://www.meridian.wednet.edu/our-district/school-board/policies-procedures/\]](https://www.meridian.wednet.edu/our-district/school-board/policies-procedures/).*

## What is sexual harassment?

**Sexual harassment** is any unwelcome conduct or communication that is sexual in nature and substantially interferes with a student's educational performance or creates an intimidating or hostile environment. Sexual harassment can also occur when a student is led to believe they must submit to unwelcome sexual conduct or communication to gain something in return, such as a grade or a place on a sports team.

Examples of sexual harassment can include pressuring a person for sexual actions or favors; unwelcome touching of a sexual nature; graphic or written statements of a sexual nature; distributing sexually explicit texts, e-mails, or pictures; making sexual jokes, rumors, or suggestive remarks; and physical violence, including rape and sexual assault.

Our schools do not discriminate based on sex and prohibit sex discrimination in all of our education programs and employment, as required by Title IX and state law.

*To review the district's Sexual Harassment Policy [3205] and Procedure [3205P], visit [\[https://www.meridian.wednet.edu/our-district/school-board/policies-procedures/\]](https://www.meridian.wednet.edu/our-district/school-board/policies-procedures/).*

## What should my school do about discriminatory and sexual harassment?

When a school becomes aware of possible discriminatory or sexual harassment, it must investigate and stop the harassment. The school must address any effects the harassment had on the student at school, including eliminating the hostile environment, and make sure that the harassment does not happen again.

## What can I do if I'm concerned about discrimination or harassment?

**Talk to a Coordinator or submit a written complaint.** You may contact the following school district staff members to report your concerns, ask questions, or learn more about how to resolve your concerns.

Concerns about discrimination:

Civil Rights Coordinator: Assistant Superintendent Kurt Harvill, [kharvill@meridian.wednet.edu](mailto:kharvill@meridian.wednet.edu), 360-398-2111

Concerns about sex discrimination, including sexual harassment:

Title IX Coordinator: Assistant Superintendent Kurt Harvill, [kharvill@meridian.wednet.edu](mailto:kharvill@meridian.wednet.edu), 360-398-2111

Concerns about disability discrimination:

Section 504 Coordinator: Special Services Director Aaron Jacoby, [ajacoby@meridian.wednet.edu](mailto:ajacoby@meridian.wednet.edu), 360-398-2111

Concerns about discrimination based on gender identity:

Gender-Inclusive Schools Coordinator: Special Services Director Aaron Jacoby, [ajacoby@meridian.wednet.edu](mailto:ajacoby@meridian.wednet.edu), 360-398-2111

To submit a written complaint, describe the conduct or incident that may be discriminatory and send

it by mail, fax, email, or hand delivery to the school principal, district superintendent, or civil rights coordinator. Submit the complaint as soon as possible for a prompt investigation, and within one year of the conduct or incident.

### What happens after I file a discrimination complaint?

The Civil Rights Coordinator will give you a copy of the school district's discrimination complaint procedure. The Civil Rights Coordinator must make sure a prompt and thorough investigation takes place. The investigation must be completed within 30 calendar days unless you agree to a different timeline. If your complaint involves exceptional circumstances that require a longer investigation, the Civil Rights Coordinator will notify you in writing with the anticipated date for their response.

When the investigation is complete, the school district superintendent or the staff member leading the investigation will send you a written response. This response will include:

- A summary of the results of the investigation
- A determination of whether the school district failed to comply with civil rights laws
- Any corrective measures or remedies needed
- Notice about how you can appeal the decision

### What are the next steps if I disagree with the outcome?

If you do not agree with the outcome of your complaint, you may appeal the decision to the Superintendent or their designee and then to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). More information about this process, including important timelines, is included in the district's Nondiscrimination Procedure ([3210P](#)) and Sexual Harassment Procedure ([3205P](#)).

### I already submitted an HIB complaint – what will my school do?

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB) can also be discrimination if it's related to a protected class. If you give your school a written report of HIB that involves discrimination or sexual harassment, your school will notify the Civil Rights Coordinator. The school district will investigate the complaint using both the Nondiscrimination Procedure ([3210P](#)) and the HIB Procedure ([3207P](#)) to fully resolve your complaint.

### Who else can help with HIB or Discrimination Concerns?

#### Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

All reports must start locally at the school or district level. However, OSPI can assist students, families, communities, and school staff with questions about state law, the HIB complaint process, and the discrimination and sexual harassment complaint processes.

OSPI School Safety Center (For questions about harassment, intimidation, and bullying)

- Website: [ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/school-safety-center](http://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/school-safety-center)
- Email: [schoolsafety@k12.wa.us](mailto:schoolsafety@k12.wa.us)
- Phone: 360-725-6068

OSPI Equity and Civil Rights Office (For questions about discrimination and sexual harassment)

- Website: [ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/equity-and-civil-rights](http://ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/equity-and-civil-rights)
- Email: [equity@k12.wa.us](mailto:equity@k12.wa.us)
- Phone: 360-725-6162

#### Washington State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO)

The Washington State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds works with families, communities, and schools to address problems together so every student can fully participate and thrive in Washington's K-12 public schools. OEO provides informal conflict resolution tools, coaching, facilitation, and training about family, community engagement, and systems advocacy.

- Website: [www.oeo.wa.gov](http://www.oeo.wa.gov)

- Email: [oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov](mailto:oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov)
- Phone: 1-866-297-2597

#### U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces federal nondiscrimination laws in public schools, including those that prohibit discrimination based on sex, race, color, national origin, disability, and age. OCR also has a discrimination complaint process.

- Website: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>
- Email: [orc@ed.gov](mailto:orc@ed.gov)
- Phone: 800-421-3481

### Our School is Gender-Inclusive

In Washington, all students have the right to be treated consistent with their gender identity at school. Our school will:

- Address students by their requested name and pronouns, with or without a legal name change
- Change a student's gender designation and have their gender accurately reflected in school records
- Allow students to use restrooms and locker rooms that align with their gender identity
- Allow students to participate in sports, physical education courses, field trips, and overnight trips in accordance with their gender identity
- Keep health and education information confidential and private
- Allow students to wear clothing that reflects their gender identity and apply dress codes without regard to a student's gender or perceived gender
- Protect students from teasing, bullying, or harassment based on their gender or gender identity

To review the district's Gender-Inclusive Schools Policy ([3211](#)) and Procedure ([3211A](#)), visit <https://www.meridian.wednet.edu/our-district/school-board/policies-procedures/>. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Gender-Inclusive Schools Coordinator: Special Services Director Aaron Jacoby, [ajacoby@meridian.wednet.edu](mailto:ajacoby@meridian.wednet.edu), 360-398-2111

For concerns about discrimination or discriminatory harassment based on gender identity or gender expression, please see the information above.





# MERIDIAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Handbook Agreement 2023-2024

Please complete the following information:

Student Name:	
Guardian Name:	
Homeroom Teacher:	Grade Level:

Please check the boxes indicating review of the following information:

- Both student and guardian have reviewed the MMS handbook in full
- Both student and guardian understand the behavioral expectations listed
- Both student and guardian understand that cell phones may only be used during times the student is not in class (before school, passing time, lunch, after school)
- Both student and guardian understand that absences and tardies need to be communicated to the office and what types of absences are considered excused
- Both student and guardian understand the basic dress code requirements

Please sign below:

Student Signature:
Guardian Signature:
Date:

Signed and completed forms should be removed from the handbook and returned to your Homeroom Teacher by Friday, September 6.

Please keep the handbook in your binder for review as needed.