



MONTANA
SCHOOL for the
Deaf & the Blind

Giving kids the building blocks to independence

Student/Parent Handbook

MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

3911 Central Avenue
Great Falls, Montana 59405
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(MSDB's Student/Parent Handbook is also available online at www.msdb.mt.gov)

The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) is a state supported special purpose school serving as a placement option for hearing impaired or visually impaired (deafness, hearing impairment or visual impairment 20-8-102, MCA) children who are not more than 21 years of age. Services available at MSDB are dependent upon the funding provided through direct appropriation of the state legislature.

The vision of the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind is to promote and maintain excellent and comprehensive educational opportunities for every deaf, hard-of-hearing, blind, low vision and deafblind child in Montana which shall lead to the highest potential for adult life of independence and self sufficiency; a meaningful personal, family and community life; and a useful, productive occupational life.

In essence, our mission is to provide our students with *“Education, Communication and Independence for Life”*.

Procedure for Referral, Evaluation, and Enrollment at MSDB

1. Referral of Students for Placement Consideration

- Children ages 18 months to 3 years old will be referred by their Part C Provider.
- School aged students will be referred by the public school they attend or district in which they reside.
- All referrals must be received in writing from the IFSP or IEP team.
- The referral will include the student's IEP/CST, documentation of educationally significant hearing or vision impairment, reports on any significant medical issues, educational assessment results, functional behavior assessment if applicable, high school transcript and schedule if applicable, attendance reports, discipline reports, most recent report card, achievements scores, immunization record and an Evaluation Plan completed by the referring team and signed by the parent.

2. File review by the MSDB intake committee

The intake committee composed of the school psychologist, a school administrator, a program supervisor, appropriate support specialists, classroom teachers and when appropriate, a residential counselor will review the student's file to determine:

- If the student has a qualifying disability of deafness, hearing or vision loss. If the loss is significant enough to preclude the local district from being able to provide an appropriate educational program for the student.
- If the student's academic, developmental, medical, social/emotional and behavioral needs can be met by the available services and programs at MSDB.
- If the student is a danger to himself or others and/or presents systemic behavior which is disruptive to the educational process of other students.
- Students requiring residential placement must not be a danger to self or others; they must be able to live cooperatively with other students, accept and take direct from staff, demonstrate self-help skills (self-feeding, chewing & swallowing most foods, assist in dressing, bathing & toileting and indicate an awareness of being soiled or wet at the preschool level) that are developmentally appropriate for his/her chronological age.
- If the student presents physical or medically related health or safety issues which are beyond the scope of appropriate care by the education or health services staff.
- If the goals of the student's current IEP could be accommodated by MSDB for the duration of an evaluation period; if not, some modifications may be made and noted if an evaluation is recommended.

3. Observation period (typically 10 school days)

- If, following the file review, an observation period at MSDB is recommended, the IEP written by the referring district will remain in force (with any noted modifications made by the MSDB team) and the responsibility for FAPE will remain with the referring district during the observation period.
- Observation period dates will be established.
- Parents will complete the MSDB Admission/Evaluation Application packet.
- The components of the observation may include a classroom based assessment, observations by school and cottage staff as appropriate academic achievement, developmental/cognitive assessment, functional vision, Braille/reading media, technology and orientation and mobility assessments for visually impaired students, audiological, speech/language and communication assessments as appropriate.

4. Report back to referring district

- Upon completion of the observation period, MSDB will reconvene the IEP to report observation results.
- Information on eligibility for special services will be discussed.
- Educational implications and recommendations will be discussed.
- Recommendations for support services will be discussed.
- Placement recommendations will be discussed.

5. Enrollment

- Enrollment at MSDB is contingent on the outcome of the observation and a recommendation of the MSDB evaluation team that the school can provide the most appropriate educational services for the student and that this placement is the least restrictive setting for the implementation of those services.
- In accordance with an interagency agreement between the Office of Public Instruction and MSDB, a student may not be placed at MSDB by an IEP team without the concurrence of the MSDB representative.
- The child's parent or guardian must accompany the student for a visit and complete all necessary paperwork.

6. Residential enrollment

- Students requiring residential placement must not be a danger to self or others, must be able to live cooperatively with other students, accept and take direction from staff, demonstrate self-help skills (self-feeding, chewing and swallowing most foods, assist in dressing, bathing and toileting, and indicate an awareness of being soiled or wet at the preschool level) that are developmentally appropriate for his/her chronological age.
- The child's parent or guardian must accompany the student for a visit of the residential facilities, complete a program application and provide necessary medical records and releases.

If you have any questions regarding the referral, review, observation, and enrollment procedures, please contact our Admissions Coordinator at (406) 771-6006 or via [email](#).

Revised 07/08

TRANSFER TO LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY

The transfer of students from MSDB to their home school district shall be accomplished by the recommendation of the IEP team.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

MSDB follows the state of Montana graduation requirements with additional elective credits. Students wishing to graduate from GFHS must complete GFHS graduation requirements. Students choosing the later may still participate in MSDB's graduation ceremony. For more information, refer to MSDB's Course Catalog.

GRADE REPORTS

Elementary students are graded on a quarterly basis for classes at MSDB and/or Lewis and Clark Elementary School. Middle school students receive midterm and quarter grades from MSDB and/or East Middle School. High school students receive quarter grades and midterm deficiency reports, when warranted, from MSDB and/or Great Falls High School. All deficiency reports, midterm and quarter grade reports are mailed home. At any time, students may do a Grade Check Request in order to see how they are performing in class.

DEFINITION OF "SCHOOL DAY"

The school day shall be defined as any beginning and ending time appropriate to grade level and program. In general the school day extends from 7:50 AM - 3:05 PM. This includes class periods at MSDB, Lewis and Clark Elementary School, East Middle School, Great Falls High School, and other schools in the city of Great Falls. The school day includes all scheduled class periods, break times, lunch time and study hall. Students are required to be on campus and at assigned locations during the school day unless otherwise excused through the Principal's office.

BELL SCHEDULES (may be subject to change)

<u>Regular Bell Schedule</u>		<u>Travel Home Bell Schedule</u>	
1st period	7:50 – 8:40	1st period	7:50 – 8:30
2nd period	8:40 – 9:30	2nd period	8:30 – 9:10
3rd period	9:30 – 10:20	3rd period	9:10 – 9:50
4th period	10:20 – 11:10	4th period	9:50 – 10:30
Lunch	11:10 - 11:55	5th period	10:30 - 11:05
5th period	11:55 - 12:45	Lunch	11:05 - 11:40
6th period	12:45 – 1:30	6th period	11:40 – 12:15
7th period	1:30 – 2:15	7th period	12:15 – 12:50
8th period	2:15 – 3:05	8th period	12:50 – 1:30

ATTENDANCE

Montana law (MCA 20-5-102, 20-5-103, and 20-5-106) requires all students to attend school until age 16 or eighth grade equivalency. Absences must be excused daily by the student's parent, MSDB health service, or scheduled travel. A student who stays out of school for other reasons and is not sick is **unexcused** and is breaking the attendance laws.

ATTENDANCE POLICY AT MSDB

Policy Number 3122

All students at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind are required by state law (20-5-101 MCA) to go to school until the age of 16 years or eighth grade equivalency. No student may stay out of school unless that student is ill or has been excused by a doctor for medical reasons. *Oversleeping or missing the bus will not be considered excused.* A student who stays out of school for other reasons and is not sick is **unexcused** and is breaking the attendance laws.

Any time a student is absent from school or from class during the day, s/he is required to bring a written note from a parent, houseparent or infirmary staff explaining the absence. If the absence is less than a full day, the student will be required to get a note from the attendance secretary to leave and to reenter the classroom.

Student admit/passes are required when a student is late from another class or appointment.

Attendance Procedures

The school day begins at 7:50 a.m. and ends at 3:05 p.m. If a student is going to have a planned absence, a parent or guardian must call the MSDB education secretary at 771-6030 the day before the absence. If a student is ill, the parent or guardian must call on the day of the absence no later than **7:45 a.m.** *If the student is in mainstream classes, the parent must call both MSDB and the public school the child attends.* This will enable MSDB staff to notify the student's interpreter or vision support staff of the absence. Phone numbers for the attendance offices are:

Lewis and Clark Elementary	268-6705
East Middle School	268-6501
Great Falls High School	268-6251
MSDB	771-6030

Make Up Work

Work missed during excused absences must be made up after the student returns to school or as designated by the teacher. For middle and high school students, it is the student's responsibility to make appointments with the teacher for makeup work or to schedule necessary tutoring with the educational interpreter. Assignments may be obtained for classes by calling the following numbers:

Lewis and Clark Elementary	268-7299 or 268-6705
East Middle School Homework Hotline	268-7299 or 268-6500
Great Falls High School Homework Hotline	268-7299 or 268-6250
MSDB	771-6030

TARDINESS

Policy Number 3122

Students must be seated at their desks at the beginning of each class period. A pass will be required for the student to enter the classroom after the period begins. The Principal will be advised of tardiness on either an absence/tardy form or on AIM (school management database). Detentions will be served for repeated tardiness. Students with a written excuse or telephone permission from parents or cottages should go to the education secretary for a pass before going to class. A tardy will be considered an absence when the first fifteen (15) minutes of a period are missed.

Once in class, students must have the teacher's permission and a pass to leave the classroom for any reason. Staff can ask to see these any time a student is out of the classroom.

Upon return from mainstream classes in the public schools, students must immediately report to their next period class or study hall. Students must have permission and a pass from their teacher or supervisor before they will be allowed to go to any other part of the school building or campus for any reason.

Tardiness in excess of three (3) occurrences in any class during a single quarter will be considered a minor infraction. *At the discretion of the teacher, detention may be given for tardiness.*

TRUANCY

Unexcused absence from any class or study hall makes the student subject to disciplinary action. It is necessary for the student to seek class reinstatement through the Principal's office.

MSDB EXCESSIVE ABSENCES - 10 DAY RULE FOR SENIOR HIGH STUDENTS GRADES 9 – 12

Policy Number 3122

The Board of Public Education believes that classroom participation is an important part of the learning experience. Therefore, no student will receive credit for a semester of work in any course in which he or she has had more than 10 unexcused absences.

Absences may be excused by the Principal for the following reasons:

- 1) School Related - The student is absent because of a school approved activity or travel.
- 2) Illness or Serious Injury - The student is absent because of an illness or injury. In these cases the parent/guardian must notify the school by phone or in writing. The Principal may request verification from an attending physician.

When a student has five to seven unexcused absences, the Principal/Supervising Teacher will send the student's parents or guardian a letter of notification.

The Principal may waive the provisions of this rule based on special circumstances and/or emergencies which are unavoidable. A conference will be scheduled with the student, parent or guardian and the Principal before the absence is excused.

DUAL ENROLLMENT

MSDB partners with Great Falls Public Schools to broaden our students' educational opportunities.

Students dually enrolled at MSDB and Great Falls public schools have opportunities to participate in activities that correspond to their course selection and/or general school events based on the number of hours/classes enrolled in each school. To provide a well-rounded education, we like the students to participate in activities as long as they are not missing important class work and/or are able to make it up. Parents and students can fill out a "Choices" form and/or discuss their preferences at the IEP.

MSDB will try to accommodate as many as possible; however, when there are conflicts, the school activity where the student attends most of the school day will take precedence.

INTERPRETER SERVICES

Interpreter services are provided for students needing a visual language system and/or sign language support in order to facilitate communication and/or access the curriculum while in the public schools. Younger students or new interpreter users will be given greater assistance in the classroom as they learn how to successfully access the interpreter. More experienced interpreter users will be expected to be more independent in their usage.

As part of learning how to independently access interpreter services, students who are experienced interpreter users will need to fill out an Interpreter Services Request form for any services required outside of their regularly scheduled day. This may include after school plays, athletic activities, IEP's, assemblies, or a variety of other things. These forms can be obtained from the secretarial staff or the Coordinating Interpreter. Students should fill this form out as soon as they know about their activity

so the MSDB staff has ample time to prepare. Failure to comply may result in lack of interpreter services or non-permission to attend the event.

SUPPORT SERVICES

A school psychologist, school counselor, speech therapists, audiologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, behavior specialist, and orientation-mobility specialist are available to assist students in their specific areas of need. Students are served on campus and through our state-wide outreach program.

BUSING

Busing is provided for MSDB students aged 3 and above. If a student rides the bus to and/or from school:

- The parent must notify the bus if their child is not riding on a given day. Consistently failing to notify the bus if the child is not riding may result in a stop in bus service.
- Notify MSDB prior to the end of the school day if you have made other plans for pick-up and do not need bus service.

During the school year, all mainstreamed students living in the Great Falls area are expected to attend school when the Great Falls Public Schools are in session and MSDB is closed unless otherwise determined in the IEP. Almost always, the public school are in session about a week longer than MSDB. Bus transportation is not normally provided during the last week of GFPS as MSDB is closed. The school will contact you about alternate transportation if this is the case for your child.

AWARDS

A number of awards are available each year to qualified students. Many individual awards are presented to students at an annual Awards Assembly on the last day of the school year. Additionally, students can be honored in the Principal's 100 Club or the Dean's Club, Schulte's Student of the Week, Tribune Student of the Week, as well as with Reading Calendar and Learning Connections achievement certificates.

It is our belief that in presenting these awards, students will have a number of positive incentives to be recognized for academic and social success.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS

A wide variety of organizations are available to students at MSDB, through the public schools and in the community at large as population and student interest demands. Five on campus organizations that have held steadfast throughout the years are Jr. NAD, Expressions of Silence, Cane Club, Visually Impaired Performers, and the High School Class groups. In order for all students to get maximum benefit from these opportunities, it is important for the student to have sufficient self-help, communication and independence skills. If a child requires assistance to participate, a parent or family member must accompany them.

The Junior National Association of the Deaf (Jr. NAD) is a fraternal organization that performs a variety of service activities centered on the development of a cohesive deaf community. Meetings are held according to parliamentary procedures and officers are elected from the membership of the group. Meetings are held on a regular basis.

Expressions of Silence is a performing group comprised of 5th - 12th graders who perform to songs using sign language and dance. The goal of the group is to provide the students with an opportunity to increase their self-esteem, travel (throughout Montana to perform for various groups), learn new songs, signs, and various choreography routines. They practice diligently throughout the school year to make each performance a memorable event for those fortunate enough to attend.

Cane Club was started by a group of blind and low vision students at MSDB. Their goals are to inform the public about visual impairments, have fun, and learn about the community. The club meets twice a month but may also have special activities. They attend other clubs or facilities in the community for social events with sighted children and adults and invite other groups to join them for planned events. Visually Impaired students from 3rd to 12th grade are invited to join.

The Visually impaired Performers (VIP) was created by a group of staff and students in the Visually Impaired Department to meet the creative talents of our students. Students are involved in singing, musical and theatrical performances. Our goal is to provide the students with an opportunity to increase their self-esteem, learn about the community, learn new songs and share their abilities as people with visual impairments. The group meets every other week to prepare for public and campus performances. Students grade 3 - 12 are encouraged to attend.

Class groupings are generally established by the time students have reached ninth grade status. Each Class (i.e. Class of 2012, Class of 2013, etc.) must have adult sponsors. Sponsors are generally staff members. Class sponsors must be approved by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

Class dues are paid by the students and the group participates in a variety of fund raising efforts throughout their high school career. The object of all Class activities is to raise funds for a senior trip, which is generally taken in the spring of the students' senior year. Please note that not all seniors participate in the senior trip due to a variety of circumstances. A decision about participation is made by the start of the senior year.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF DONATED FUNDS TO HELP WITH THE SENIOR TRIP

The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind Foundation has adopted a policy of contributing, from donated funds, up to one half (1/2) the cost of the senior trip at MSDB. This cost would be a maximum of \$300 per student plus travel and per diem for the class sponsor(s).

SPORTS

MSDB co-ops with Great Falls Central Catholic High School in order to provide our high school students with an opportunity to participate in high school sports with another Class C school. If a student is interested in playing a sport, please contact the Athletic Director for more information.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Students have an opportunity to learn good work habits and behaviors while building work skills when they participate in the MSDB Work Experience Program. Students may work in a volunteer position or one in which they could possibly earn a small wage (stipend/allowance). Some students work jobs at a competitive wage. High school students can earn an elective credit for work experience classes. Students usually begin by working on campus job sites and expand to off-campus work sites as their skills grow. As with any job, students will need to follow specific work experience practices in order to fulfill requirements (ex: filling out a timesheet in order to get paid).

TRAVEL DAYS

Because MSDB is committed to seeing that residential students have as much time as possible to be with their families during the school year, a unique school calendar has been developed to include regular travel weekends and/or vacations. To accommodate these travel days and maintain a traditional school calendar, there are days when the Great Falls Public Schools are in session and MSDB is closed. If a residential student misses classes in the Great Falls Public Schools or MSDB due to travel, ***it is important that she or he makes up any missed work during these excused absences.*** Teachers and interpreters will be aware of the travel schedule in advance and will be able to help students make arrangements to complete all assignments due to school related travel. However, it is the student's responsibility to request make up assignments, make arrangements with the interpreter/tutor if assistance is needed and see that all work is turned in as required.

All mainstreamed students living in the Great Falls area are expected to attend school on travel days and vacation days when the Great Falls Public Schools are in session and MSDB is closed. It is important to note these dates if a student is taking some or all of his or her classes in one of the public schools. If he or she will not be attending school on any of these dates, ***MSDB must be contacted at least one week in advance so that we can notify the interpreter of his or her absence.***

VISITORS

Parents are welcome to visit the school. When visiting, please remember to sign in at the office first. Please contact your child's teacher to make arrangements before you visit the classroom. As students are engaged in the learning process, enter the room quietly and follow the teacher's lead for watching or participating in activities.

Visitors are to sign into the main office or VI (Aspen Hall) Supervising Teacher's office where they will receive a visitor's badge. Individuals in the school without a badge will be asked to go to the building office to sign in.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

Each teacher will submit their own classroom rules to the Principal. Breaking these rules will have consequences found in the School Wide Rules.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Textbooks, pencils and pens are necessary to help students learn. Students can get these things from their teacher. Various specialized items or technology are available for students to use and/or check out. To check out materials, a form will need to be completed that explains the replacement costs if materials are damaged or not returned.

Homework assignments are expected to be completed before coming to the classroom, unless a student is sick or was sick the day before. Mainstreamed students who are behind with their homework or class projects are not excused from MSDB classrooms. Sports, chores, etc., are not acceptable excuses for not doing homework. Team members will not be excused from school for athletic practice or games if they have not finished their schoolwork. Homework can be given any night and on weekends. Homework binders are available to help students remember assignments.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Reading is an important skill that enables students' independence in life. MSDB encourages reading in all its forms, not only in the classroom but also by checking-out library books and materials. Through the years, we instill practices that make students good library patrons (such as being responsible about borrowing & returning books). There is no fine for overdue books. *However, books average from \$10 to \$20 each, and therefore students are expected to pay for lost or damaged items.*

Students will receive 3 overdue notices if a book has not been returned. Supportive steps, such as contacting the teacher, cottage and parents are implemented to help students get materials back. Replacement costs are listed on the final notice. After the final notice, if all attempts to return a book fails and/or if the book is lost, the student is expected to replace it.

Optional Payment for Lost Books:

Lost Book - Agreement to Pay

When a student loses a book, they will only be allowed to check out one book a week, which must stay in their classroom, until a *Lost Book Agreement* (LBA) is signed by a parent or guardian. *Lost Book Agreements* are a written promise to pay the full price of the book, or replace the book (see below) in the event that the book is not found by May 14th of that school year. This provides the student a chance to continue looking for the book during the school year. Once an LBA is signed, student's full library privileges will be restored.

Replacement

It is acceptable to replace the lost book with one of the same title in the exact edition, size, and quality condition. Please check with the librarian for more information if this is an option you choose.

Hardship Cases

Any parent who feels that paying for a lost book causes them undue financial hardship may speak to the librarian, and steps will be taken to resolve the situation with dignity.

"Work Off" Books

Middle school or high school age students can choose to fulfill their responsibility by "working off" the monies owed on lost books. The amount of time for "work-off payment" is calculated by using the formula for minimum wage at that current time (approx. \$7.25 / per hour). For example: if a book is worth \$15.00, the student is expected to work about 2 hours. The work must be done after the final notice is given, and no refund is given if the book is later found.

All lost books are to be replaced, paid for, or worked off before 1st week in June. Please remember our goal is to keep our library full of books and dynamic for our learners!

GOOD STUDY HABITS

Try to become interested in what you are studying. If you are bored, you won't learn or remember what you study. Try to develop good study habits.

1. Think about what you are doing. Think about one idea at a time and forget everything else.
2. Make sure you really understand what the teacher has given you to do for homework. Ask if you are unsure.
3. Read the directions before you do your homework.
4. Do your hard homework **FIRST**. You can think better at the beginning when you are less tired.
5. Make a study plan so you will be able to finish all your homework and be ready for the next day.
6. Use a dictionary to help you to understand new words. Do not depend on a friend or adult to give you the meaning; you may not remember it.

7. When you are confused, ask your teacher for help. Don't be afraid to ask a question or say, "I don't understand!"
8. If you need help, talk to your parents, teacher, house parent or counselor.

HOW TO TAKE AND PASS A TEST

1. Get a good night's sleep the night before a test.
2. Read the directions before you start. Be sure you know exactly what you should do.
3. Work quickly; be careful not to make careless mistakes.
4. First, answer the questions that you know.
5. Read all the choices in a multiple-choice question carefully before you pick your answer.
6. Remember that studying on a regular basis is one of the best ways to be prepared for a test.

COMPLETION OF HOMEWORK AND MAKE-UP WORK

Homework is assigned to reinforce and/or give additional practice for a skill taught during recent classes. **All work must be made up**, no matter the reasons for the absence. It is the student's **responsibility** to talk with the teacher about make-up work.

If a student is planning to be absent for two (2) or more days, the student must contact the Principal's office to obtain a MSDB excused absence form which must be signed by each teacher. Each teacher can assign homework or arrange for make-up work. This form must be turned into the Education Secretary before the student is officially excused. Students attending GFHS will also be required to get a pink absence sheet from the GFHS office and have their GFHS teachers sign it. The pink absence sheet is to be turned into GFHS' office for the student to be officially excused.

Students needing homework assistance can make arrangements with their teachers to meet before or after school. For students in mainstreamed classes, homework assistance times are also available at their school. If they are planning to attend, let the Coordinating Interpreter know so that interpreter services can be arranged. Homework assistance is also available for cottage students during the Cottage Homework Connection time.

SCHOOL WIDE RULES

Policy Number 3300

MSDB has a campus wide behavior program that emphasizes safety, responsibility and respect in accordance with our progressive discipline policy.

1. Students keep themselves and others safe at all times.

This means:

- Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself.
- Wear helmets when riding bikes or skateboards.
- No running or horseplay.

This is NOT:

- Pushing, hitting, poking, touching or fighting with others.
- "Rough-housing", throwing objects or horseplay.
- Not having items like cigarette lighters, toy guns or firecrackers.

2. Students are respectful to other students and staff at all times.

This means:

- Use appropriate language and have appropriate conversations.
- Treat each other in a kind manner.
- Respectfully follow directions from ALL staff.

This is NOT:

- Swearing or talking “dirty”.
- Touching others inappropriately.
- Being rude, name calling or mean teasing.
- Arguing with staff or teachers.

3. Students are responsible for their own behaviors.

This means:

- Follow all school rules.
- Let others know your needs appropriately.
- Accept consequences for your behavior gracefully.
- Have your materials ready and complete your assignments on time.
- Keep your room clean in the cottage and complete cottage chores.
- Be a good sport during games and activities.

This is NOT:

- Intentionally disobeying school rules.
- Yelling or becoming angry when you don’t get your own way.
- Blaming others for your behavior.
- Being unprepared for class or not finishing your homework

Sequence of Consequences for rule violations:

School	Cottage
1. Warning.	Warning.
2. Removal from group.	Removal from group.
3. Detention.	“Cottage Detention” – 30 minute delay from Activity Room/Game Room, etc.
4. Detention with call to parents.	“Cottage Detention” with call to parents.
5. Detention with administrator conference AND parent call.	“Cottage Detention” with administrator conference AND parent call.
6. ISS	“Stuck”
7. OSS	Sent home

When detention is given, an incident report form is written. The incident report form is given to the Principal or Dean of Students.

DEFINITIONS

Detention is defined as a period of time beyond regular school hours, or over the lunch break, during which a student remains in the school building for one of three reasons:

1. Failure to complete class work on time.
2. Inability to conduct himself/herself in a manner conducive to the educational setting.
3. Tardiness.

Length of detention for the first two reasons will be determined by classroom teacher, and if applicable, the principal or supervising teacher according to the seriousness of the offense.

In-School Suspension (ISS) is defined as that time a student is formally removed from direct participation in school day activities and is required to complete his or her school day activities in an alternative area away from the regular classroom. A student may be placed in in-school suspension status as a result of disciplinary action. In-school suspension can be for a maximum of 5 days. Students on in-school suspension status will follow these rules:

1. The student must remain in the designated areas at all times and is not allowed to use the IMC.
2. Teachers will bring class work to the student and collect the work from the area on a daily basis.
3. Failure to complete class assignments will result in further disciplinary action.

CONFINEMENT TO ROOM is defined as the confinement of a residential student to his/her room except to attend classes or attend meals. Any student confined to his/her room will receive some type of on-going intervention strategy. The length of time being confined to his/her room shall not exceed five (5) days.

CAMPUSED is defined as confinement of a student to the MSDB campus for an infraction of a rule. A student who has been "campused" shall not be permitted to leave the school grounds until the punishment is finished. Any student being campused will receive some type of on-going intervention strategy. The length of being campused shall not exceed five (5) days.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) is defined as a short term guidance or disciplinary placement of the student at home with his or her parent or guardian. Suspension will not exceed 10 consecutive days or a series of suspensions which does not constitute a significant change in placement (ARM 10.16.2711).

All suspensions will be in accordance with sections 20-4-302, 20-4-402 and 20-4-403, MCA. For those circumstances or conditions where a student is to be suspended, the superintendent will use the following procedures:

1. Call together an appropriate committee to examine the circumstances and reasons for action of suspension.
2. Examine all other alternatives.
3. Communicate and discuss the matter with the parents or guardian.

Expulsion Policy Number 3311

Expulsion is defined as removal of the student from the regular school program at the location where the violation occurred. Expulsion or permanent exclusion is solely the direct responsibility of the Board of Public Education (20-5-202 MCA). All expulsions will be in accordance with PL 101-476, IDEA 20 U.S.C. Sections 1400-1485 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped Act 29 U.S.C. Section 706 and Montana's Suspension and Expulsion law, Sections 20-5-201 and 20-05-202 MCA.

1. Expulsion will be used only when it is evident that there is little or no possibility of the pupil's ability to benefit from a continued school experience and that his presence would constitute a hazard to the school program. Expulsion or permanent exclusion is solely the direct responsibility of the Board of Public Education. (MCA 20-5-202)
2. The parents or guardians shall be notified in writing of their opportunity to appear before the Board of Public Education prior to any action of expulsion. (MCA 20-5-202)
3. Upon completion of a Manifest Determination, an IEP meeting will be held and the team will determine continued educational services for a student who has been expelled.

MANIFEST DETERMINATION

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, a Manifest Determination will be conducted on any student considered for expulsion. The purpose of Manifest Determination is to decide if the cause of expulsion is in any way connected to the student's disability.

APPROVAL OF SUPERINTENDENT

1. The Superintendent shall make an administrative recommendation to the Board based on a thorough investigation of the case and the recommendations of the Principal or Dean of Students.

NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

1. Parents shall be notified of the intent to request expulsion by the Board.
2. If the Board expels the student, the Clerk of the Board shall officially notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the action.

PROCEDURE FOR READMITTANCE

1. Readmission of an expelled student is possible provided the cause(s) leading to the expulsion have been corrected or substantially diminished.
2. Readmission is subject to approval by the Board.

Title IX and Sexual Harassment

NOTIFICATION OF TITLE IX / EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY ASSURANCE

It is the policy of the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind that all students and employees have a right to learn and work in an environment free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment.

It should be understood that discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age physical or mental disability, marital status, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, or political beliefs as well as any form of sexual harassment is against the law and the State of Montana. The MSDB is committed to the prevention of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace. In addition, the State of Montana prohibits retaliation against any employee because he or she has made a report of alleged discrimination or sexual harassment or against any employee who has testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation of a report.

Sexual harassment is generally defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for favors and other verbal, physical and/or visual contact of sexual nature when:

- Submission is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment.
- Submission or rejection by an employee is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the employee.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or otherwise offensive work environment.

The following are examples of sexual harassment:

- Sexual advances which are unwanted (this may include situations which began as reciprocal attractions, but later ceased to be reciprocal).
- Sexual gestures.

- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons or posters.
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, sexually-oriented jokes, innuendoes or obscenities. Sexually suggestive letters, notes or invitations.
- Reprisals or threats after a negative response to sexual advances.
- Employment benefits affected in exchange for sexual favors (may include situations where a third party is treated less favorably because others have agreed to sexual advances).
- Physical conduct such as assault, attempted rape, impeding or blocking movement, or touching.
- Women or men in nontraditional work environments may also be subject to hazing (this may include being dared or asked to perform unsafe work practices).

You should report discrimination or sexual harassment as soon as possible after the incident or action occurs. Early reporting is encouraged, because administration's ability to investigate and act on reports diminishes with time. If you feel you are being discriminated against or sexually harassed, do not keep it to yourself, take the following steps:

- Inform the individual that his/her behavior is unwelcome, offensive or inappropriate. Do not assume or hope that the problem will go away.
- If you are unable to confront the harasser or the harassment or discrimination continues, notify your supervisor, the first level supervisor who is not involved in the alleged discrimination or harassment, or the school's Title IX/EEO officer.
- Refer to MSDB's policy manual or your program's handbook for discrimination/sexual harassment prevention policies. Reporting procedures are included in the policies.
- Keep notes. Keep a record of the dates, times, places, witnesses and describe each incident. Save all notes, correspondence or related records in a safe place.

If you are considering reporting a complaint, you can:

1. Use the reporting and complain resolution procedures contained in the school's nondiscrimination/sexual harassment prevention policies:

- Student 3210 Equal Education, Nondiscrimination and Sex Equity
- Student 3225 Sexual Harassment/Intimidation
- Student 3215P Student Uniform Grievance Procedure
- Personnel 5010 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination
- Personnel 5012 Sexual Harassment/Intimidation in the Workplace
- Personnel 5240 Resolution of Staff Complaints/problem Resolution
- Employee Grievance Policy, Montana Operations Manual 3-0125

2. To file a complaint with the Human Rights Commission phone 1-800-542-0807, TDD (406) 444-9696). Complaints with the Human Rights Commission will be accepted within 180 days of the act, or extended 120 days if you are using an internal complaint procedure.

If you are not personally a victim of discrimination or sexual harassment, but observe actions against other employees which you believe to be discrimination or harassment, you are encouraged to bring it to the attention of the school's Title IX/EEO officer.

Maeona Lee
 Title IX/EEO Officer
 406-771-6116
 mlee@msdb.mt.gov

SEARCHES AND SEIZURES

Policy Number 323

The Superintendent, Principal, Dean of Students or authorized designee shall be authorized to conduct any searches or to seize property on or near the MSDB campus if he/she has reasonable suspicion to believe that any locker, car, or other container of any kind on school or cottage premises contains any item or substance which constitutes an imminent danger to the health and safety of any person or to the property of any person or MSDB. The authorized administrator or designee may perform random searches of any locker, car, or container of any kind on school premises without notice or consent. No student shall hinder, obstruct, or prevent any search authorized by this procedure.

Whenever circumstances allow, any search or seizure authorized shall be conducted in the presence of at least one (1) adult witness, and a written record of the time, date, and results shall be made by the administrator or designee. A copy shall be forwarded to the Superintendent as soon as possible.

In any instance where an item or substance is found which would appear to be in violation of the law, the circumstance shall be reported promptly to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

In any situation where the administrator or designee is in doubt as to the propriety of proceeding with any search or seizure, the administrator or designee is authorized to report to and comply with the directions of any public law enforcement agency.

MSDB POLICY ON THE USE OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS, TOBACCO PRODUCTS OR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Policy Number 3310

The possession or use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco or controlled substances of any kind is not permitted on the MSDB school grounds or while under the supervision of MSDB staff at any school, cottage, or extracurricular activity or trip. No student will be under the influence of, buy, sell, give or encourage another student to consume or use alcohol, drugs, tobacco products or controlled substances.

Legitimate use of medications including prescription drugs, over the counter medications or vitamins is permitted under the supervision of the health services office. All medications must be kept in the Health services.

Possession or use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco products or controlled substances constitutes a major infraction under MSDB's Progressive Discipline Plan. In the event that a student is found to be in violation of this policy the Great Falls Police Department will be notified and the student may be subject to applicable "Minor in Possession" statutes (45-5-624 and 45-5-637 MCA). A conference will be held with the parent or guardian. Further, students found in violation of this policy will be subject to the disciplinary actions/consequences of the Progressive Discipline Plan.

MSDB POLICY ON GUN FREE SCHOOLS

Policy Number 3315

In accordance with the provisions of the Gun Free Schools Act, no student will possess any firearm, without authorization, on school property, on the way to or from school or during any activities.

Violation of this provision may result in school expulsion for a period of one calendar year by the Board of Public Education. The administration may make exceptions on a case by case basis to

suspend the student or students involved pending a hearing before the Board. Modifications to the one year expulsion may be made by the Board on a case by case basis.

The term "firearm" will be defined as provided in (18 U.S.C. 921). This term will include any weapon which is designed, or may be converted, to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, a muffler or silencer for such weapon, or any explosive, incendiary or poison gas.

The superintendent may allow authorized persons to display firearms or dangerous objects for educational purposes. Advance written permission must be received before such objects may be brought onto school property. The firearm must be unloaded and in a condition which makes it incapable of being fired. No ammunition for the firearm may be on school property at the same time as the firearm. At the conclusion of the display, the firearm must be immediately removed from school property.

If a student violating this policy is identified as a child with disabilities either under the IDEA or section 504, a determination must be made whether the child's conduct is related to the disability. If the violation of the policy is due to a disability recognized by the IDEA or section 504, lawful procedures for changes in placement must be followed for suspensions greater than ten days and up to forty-five days.

Any student subject to expulsion will be entitled to a hearing before the Board of Public Education and in accordance with applicable sections of 20-5-202 MCA. Nothing in this policy will prevent the Board from making an alternative placement for the student in lieu of expulsion provided that such placement removes the student from the regular school program.

MSDB will keep a record of all students disciplined under this policy and the circumstances surrounding their discipline, including the number of students expelled and the types of weapons involved. This information will be provided to other governmental agencies as required by law.

WEAPONS POLICY

Weapons include firearms, hunting knives, clubs, simulated weapons or anything used to hurt another person. High school students are permitted to have a pocket knife if the overall length of the blade is not more than 2 inches. Students who have pocket knives are expected to use them safely. A pocket knife that opens mechanically is a weapon.

STUDENT USE OF MOTOR VEHICLES (Cars & Motorcycles)

No student is allowed to have a car or motorcycle on campus without permission from the Superintendent and their parents or legal guardian. After permission has been granted, residential students must keep their keys in the cottage office at all times that the vehicle is not in use. The vehicle may be used under the following conditions:

- Permission has been secured from the Dean of Students.
- Special permission must be secured from the Administration and the parents of all students involved for any passengers to be allowed to travel with the student.

- Limitations and/or restrictions set by parents will be strictly enforced.
- Permission to have a private passenger vehicle on campus can be denied or rescinded by the Superintendent throughout the school year.
- Proof of insurance must be on file in the Dean's office.
- Students must have a valid Montana driver's license.
- Students must park their cars in the lot located between the school and the gymnasium.
- No vehicle maintenance will be performed on campus.
- The school assumes no responsibility for any theft, damage or vandalism to any motor vehicle either on or off campus.
- Driving during or immediately after inclement weather is not permitted.
- Any student driving on campus in a reckless and disorderly manner will have his/her motor vehicle privileges revoked. They may only be renewed on the recommendation of the administration of MSDB.

Students as Passengers

Students may ride in private vehicles (other than immediate family members or MSDB staff) only after a written parental consent form is on file in the office.

USE OF BYCYLES BOTH ON AND OFF CAMPUS

Residential Students

Students may bring their own bicycles to school and are free to use them according to the following regulations:

1. The School will not be responsible for loss, theft or damage to any bicycle or from any injury to a student.
2. Houseparent permission is required whether riding on or off campus.
3. Students can use their bicycles as long as they stay in the areas they are signed out for and return on time.
4. No bicycle riding will be permitted on or off campus during school hours or after dark.
5. Permission to use a bicycle at MSDB can be denied at any time by the Dean of Students based on reports of rule violations.
6. When not in use, all bicycles must be kept in the locked storage areas provided by the school.
7. Anyone using a bicycle in the street must follow all traffic rules and laws.
8. No student will be permitted to ride a bicycle off campus until written parental permission is on file in the administrative office.
9. Students are not permitted to use other student's bicycles.
10. Students who ride their bicycles on campus must use them appropriately and with consideration for the students and adults who are walking or playing on the campus grounds.
11. Must wear helmet while riding.

Additional Regulations for Day Students

In addition to following the rules for the residential students, day students are expected to know and follow these rules:

1. Bike racks are available on the school grounds and should be used.
2. Day students are not permitted to ride during the lunch hour or at any time during the regular school day.

3. All bicycles should be locked when left unattended. The school is not responsible for loss, theft, or damage to any bicycle or for any injury to a student.

NETWORK ACCESS

Policy Number 3612

Students have access to computers in order to complete homework assignments, communicate via e-mail, or research information via the Internet. Students can only gain access to computers, Email and the Internet through signed permission from their parent(s) and/or guardian(s). Students are also required to sign a student technology contract that lists rules and consequences. If a student breaks the technology contract, he/she will be suspended from the use of the Internet and Email (possibly computers) for nine (9) weeks for the first offense. At the second offense, the student will be suspended from Internet and Email use for the remainder of the school year. Students who are suspended, and email family members on a regular basis, may be given a short period of time to access email services in order to send/receive electronic mail from family members.

Technology rules:

- Expect supervision.
- Keep your password private. Keep personal information private (not tell my name, address, phone number, etc. online).
- Don't be nosy (Don't look in other's folders/documents and don't try to figure out others' passwords. No "hacking".)
- Don't use another person's password. If you learn their password, report it so the password can be changed.
- Don't download and/or install any programs.
- Don't search for or go to inappropriate web sites. Report any accidental hits on inappropriate web sites to an adult and to the Network Manager.
- Don't give your email address out on the Internet without permission (do not sign up for things or have things emailed to you).
- Don't use online email (like Yahoo mail, Hotmail, gmail, etc.).
- Don't go into "chat rooms" without teacher permission.
- Don't use instant messaging programs (like IM).
- Don't use bad language, insult, bother, or threaten others on email.
- Don't forward jokes, pictures, and other things to many people at one time and don't send mail to "students" or "staff" without an adult's permission.
- Don't damage technology equipment.
- Don't use technology in an illegal manner.

SOCIAL NETWORKING: Students cannot use school resources for social networking and staff may not "friend" students on social networking sites or communicate with students in social networking site chat rooms.

Revised 08/2011

TELEPHONE/CELL PHONE USAGE

Cellular Telephone and Electronic Signaling Device Permission

In the ever changing world the Montana School recognizes the need and the benefit for students to

have personal cell phones, pagers (Sidekicks, Blackberry's etc) and other electronic signaling devices. However, it has also been determined inappropriate and excessive use of such devices has been detrimental to the educational process – in both the school and the residential program. The following is the Cellular Telephone and Electronic Signaling Device Policy from the MSDB Handbook:

Cell Phones and Electronic Signaling Devices:

Student possession and use of cellular phones, pagers, and other electronic signaling devices or calling devices on school grounds during the instructional day is a privilege which shall be permitted only with the permission of the Superintendent, Principal, Dean of Students or designee. Permission must be granted to the student each time he or she is to use a cell phone, pager, electronic signaling device or calling device during school hours. At no time shall any student operate any cellular phone or other electronic device with video capabilities (i.e.: camera phone, video camera) in any locker room, bathroom, or other location where it would violate the privacy right of another person, or, interferes with classroom instruction and school business. Unauthorized use will result in confiscation of the device by school officials, including classroom teachers, and may result in disciplinary action. Confiscated devices may be returned, at the discretion of the administration, to the parent or guardian of the student or to the student.

Students are not permitted to use the cell phone/signaling devices during classes, during school, or any activities in the after school hours (cottage program). Students may use the cell phones/signaling devices at lunch during the school day and at times in the evenings when not involved in an activity such as Cottage Homework Connection (CHC), chores, special activities and meal times. All devices must be turned off prior to going to bed at night (failure to do so may result in the device being locked up in the counselor's office during the nighttime hours).

Inappropriate use of the device will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

- 1st offense – warning
- 2nd offense – no privileges for one day
- 3rd offense – no privileges for one week
- 4th offense – no privileges for one quarter (new signed permission)

Parents will be notified on the second offense.

USE OF ELECTRONIC GAMES DURING SCHOOL HOURS

The use of electronic gaming equipment is not allowed during the school day. If a student brings one to school and attempts to use it, the game can be confiscated by school officials, including classroom teachers, and may result in disciplinary action. Confiscated games will be given to the Principal and sent home.

Revised 9/2005

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Policy Number 3224

Appropriate dress and grooming for the school setting are expected of students. Examples of clothing not suitable to wear anywhere on campus or during school activities, functions or trips include, but are not limited to: clothing with language or graphics that offend community standards, mesh garments, see-through clothing, Johnson shirts, clothing or jewelry with alcohol, marijuana, or tobacco logos or advertising.

Hats are not to be worn in school buildings, Mustang Center or classrooms, and may be confiscated if they are. Halters, midriff shirts, and muscle shirts are not suitable for wear at school or at any school sponsored activities. There must be a minimum of three inches of strap on the shoulder for shirts and five inches inseam for shorts.

No student on school property or at any school-sponsored activity shall wear, possess, use, distribute, display, or sell any clothing jewelry, emblem, badge symbol, sign, or other items which are evidence of membership in or affiliation with any gang an/or is representative of any gang.

Directors of extracurricular and co-curricular activities may establish standards of personal appearance, including dress and grooming requirements for such activities. Students wishing to participate in those extracurricular and co-curricular activities shall abide by those standards.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, PARTICIPATION AND RULES FOR GROUPS TRAVELING OUT OF TOWN

The following rules and requirement will be followed by the participants in extracurricular activities and school related trips and enforced by the administration, coaches, teachers and supervisors of the various activities.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for scholastic competition, a student must have passing grades (D or higher) in all credit earning classes one semester prior to participation in the activity. When required, students must provide appropriate medical consent forms signed by a parent or guardian.

PARTICIPATION

Truancy and/or any form of behavior at school resulting in a suspension will cause the participant to be ineligible to participate, perform or play in any activity during the length of the suspension. A second suspension will cause the student to be ineligible for both participation and practice in any activity for a period of not less than seven calendar days.

BEHAVIORAL REQUIREMENTS

Policy Number 3310

Specific "Code of Conduct and Participation Agreement" forms will be issued for individual extracurricular activities. Signatures of students, parents, coaches/sponsors, and others will signify that all agree to abide by the administration approved policies set forth on the form.

Revised 8/2005

All school practices and policies will apply to all students under the supervision of school staff whenever students are off the MSDB campus. Particularly:

1. Possession or use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco products or controlled substances is not permitted at any time.
2. Students must comply with the Student Dress Code at all times. The wearing of sweat suits and other athletic clothing will be allowed at appropriate times and only if approved by the coach or supervisor.

School sponsored, or school related trips, whether in or out of Great Falls will come under the following additional regulations:

1. Students will be expected, at all times, to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to representing the school.
2. Gambling is NOT permitted at any time.
3. Students must remain with the supervisor and the group at all times. A written release of responsibility, signed by the parent or guardian is required permitting a student to separate from the group.
4. Students will not, under any circumstances, be permitted to ride in private cars, during the duration of the trip, except as specifically arranged by the supervisor through the Superintendent's office prior to the trip.
5. Room and luggage searches are a routine responsibility of the supervisor.
6. Curfews will be imposed at the discretion of the activity supervisor.
7. Visitors will not be allowed in student motel or hotel rooms during the duration of the trip.
8. A student involved in any felony or misdemeanor offense will be returned to the custody of his/her parents, who will be responsible for any legal proceedings.

If any of these rules are broken, the parents will be called and the student will be subject to the MSDB Discipline Plan.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy Number 3200

It is the policy of the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind that students have certain rights as well as responsibilities. These rights may not interfere with the rights of other students, staff members or the operation of instructional or residential programs.

QUALITY EDUCATION

Right -Students have the right to a quality educational program which is appropriate to their needs and goals.

Responsibility -Students have the responsibility to take advantage of the educational experiences offered them and to put forth their best effort.

COMPETENT FACULTY AND STAFF

Right -Students have the right to participate in their education under competent faculty and staff.

Responsibility -Students are responsible for meeting the requirements of their classes and other programs in which they participate.

RESPECT

Right -Students have the right to receive courtesy, fairness, and respect from members of the school staff and other students.

Responsibility -Students have the responsibility to extend courtesy, fairness, and respect to members of the school staff and other students.

DECISION MAKING

Right -Students have the right to help make decisions which affect their lives in school. This right includes decisions related to selection of courses of study beyond the required curriculum, participation in activities, and representation in student government.

Responsibility -Students have the responsibility to participate in school programs, activities, and student government by voting for candidates of their choice or running for office. They are also responsible for making their problems known to the faculty, staff, and administration.

GRADES

Right-Students have the right to periodically review their progress with the teachers.

Responsibility - Students have the responsibility to periodically review their progress with teachers and seek additional help when needed.

FULL PARTICIPATION

Right -Students have the right to participate in all school organizations and activities based upon their interest, abilities, and skills.

Responsibility-Students have the responsibility to take part in activities which are designed to help them develop into fully functioning, self-reliant, mature adults.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Right-Students have the right to express their opinions verbally or in writing without jeopardizing their relations with faculty and staff. They have the right to distribute such materials on school grounds or in campus buildings as long as this expression in no way interferes with the orderly process of the school. Written approval of the appropriate school official is required.

Responsibility -Students have the responsibility to express their opinions and ideas in a respectful and responsible manner that does not offend or slander others. Freedom of expression does not extend to profane, vulgar, or pornographic materials. (Limitations through exercise of school rules are not infringements on personal rights to freedom of expression.)

COMMUNICATION

Right -Students have the right to access a variety of communication modes (speech, lip reading, sign language, finger spelling, reading, writing, and listening) as part of language and communication acquisition and development. The students also have the right to have understandable, clear, and meaningful interaction with other students and faculty/staff through a variety of communication modes as part of their learning environment.

Responsibility-Students have the responsibility to make a good faith effort to learn and master communication skills in a variety of modes.

ACCESS TO RECORDS

Right-Parents, guardians, or eligible students (18 years of age and older or attending a post-secondary school) have the right to review, update, and question the information in the student's permanent cumulative record.

Responsibility -Parents, guardians, or eligible students have the responsibility of providing the school with accurate and current information.

PROTECTION OF INFORMATION

Right -Students have the right to be protected by laws which prohibit the release of personally identifiable information to other than legally authorized persons without the consent of the parent, guardian, or an eligible student.

Responsibility-Parents, guardians, or eligible students have the responsibility to release information to legally authorized persons.

DUE PROCESS

Right-Students have the right to due process.

Responsibility-Due process will include the student being advised by the appropriate school official, usually the Principal or Dean of Students, of their misconduct, the rule which has been broken, and the reason for the accusation. When a student's offense calls for disciplinary action such as a long-term suspension or expulsion, the student shall be entitled to a hearing before the Superintendent. Students are entitled to be represented by anyone they choose, including an attorney.

SAFETY

Right -Students have the right to have a safe school environment in which to learn and live.

Responsibility-Students have the responsibility to follow established rules of conduct and decorum. Students should assist other students, faculty and staff in having a safe school.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Right-Students have the right of privacy of their personal possessions unless there is reason to believe that the student is possessing or concealing weapons, drugs, or other materials prohibited by school rules.

Responsibility -Students have the responsibility to respect the property of others and not to carry, possess or conceal weapons, drugs, or other materials that are prohibited by state laws or school rules.

RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY

Right -Students have the right to assemble.

Responsibility -Students have the responsibility to plan, seek approval, and conduct assemblies which are consistent with the objectives of the school.

RULES OF STUDENT CONDUCT

Right -Students have the right to expect clear and understandable rules of student conduct and to have the rules enforced fairly and consistently.

Responsibility - Students have the responsibility to know and follow the school rules which pertain to them.

DRESS AND GROOMING

Right - Students have the right to dress in a way that expresses their personalities within the bounds of good taste and safety. Clothing should not disrupt the orderly process of school.

Responsibility -Students have the responsibility to dress and appear on school campus according to standards of propriety, safety, and health set forth in the Student Dress Code.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Right -Students have the right to organize and participate in student organizations and extra-curricular activities, providing that group does not deny membership to any student because of race, religion, nationality, or physical handicaps.

Responsibility - Students have the responsibility to seek consent from school

administrators or proper designated school personnel before organizing students and to follow the rules for membership in clubs, organizations, and activities.

LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Right- Students have the right to a non-disruptive atmosphere which ensures a favorable learning environment.

Responsibility- Students have the responsibility to control their actions so they are not unruly, unreasonable, or disruptive.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Right- Students have the right to their own religious beliefs.

Responsibility- Students have the responsibility to not interfere with other students' rights to religious freedom.

TRANSPORTATION

Right- Students have the right to safe and orderly transportation to and from school. This includes field trips, athletic, and other off campus trips.

Responsibility- Students have the responsibility to behave so they are not a danger to themselves or others; and to refrain from violating federal, state, or local laws.

COTTAGE

PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

The philosophy of the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind's residential program is to provide the deaf, hard of hearing, and visually impaired students enrolled at the school with "the best" residential care and after school programs possible to minimize the limitations present as a result of their disabilities. Our goal is to prepare these children for the fullest possible participation in society, and to teach them how to use after school time in wholesome, constructive ways. The objectives of our residential program are:

- To provide opportunities for hearing impaired and visually impaired students to grow into mature, independent young adults with the ability to manage decision making situations.
- To support the educational process in the areas of total communication, concept development and orientation and mobility.
- To provide for the development of motor skills, and understanding of fair play and the development of healthy bodies through sports and recreational activities.
- To provide for the development of a healthy self concept through a supportive, warm, loving, and understanding living environment.
- To co-ordinate activities in the residential program with those which are provided in the classroom.

HEALTH SERVICES

Health services are provided on campus for the medical needs of our students. Any and all medications, including aspirin and vitamins, are dispensed through the health services. Any student who has a fever or has vomited will be detained in the health services to monitor their condition.

Parents will be contacted by telephone any time a student is admitted to the health services for an illness. Because of the possibility of contracting or spreading illness, students are not permitted to visit other students in the health service facility.

Medical files are kept in the Health Service. In cases of accidents or serious illnesses, if parents can not be contacted, the staff will determine if emergency medical attention is required. A signed hospital admittance paper is required to be on file in the Health Services so that students can be admitted in cases where parents are not available. All medical and dental bills incurred by the student are the responsibility of the parents or guardian.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior and discipline are based on the requirement that all students at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind understand and maintain a reasonable code of acceptable behavior, conform to the rules and regulations, and comply with all requests made by the staff in relation to MSDB routine.

Students must recognize that teachers and cottage personnel have the responsibility of maintaining a behavioral climate that makes for successful learning and living both in the classroom and in the cottage. The educational and residential staff will give the students firm and consistent guidance in and out of the classroom.

RULES FOR DAY STUDENTS

Students who attend MSDB, but live at home in Great Falls, are welcome to visit the cottages during regularly scheduled visiting hours. These times will be posted in the office. When day students visit in the cottage, they are expected to obey all of the rules that have been established for the residential students. They are required to show respect and obey the houseparents.

If a day student wishes to travel with cottage students to an activity, they must first get permission from the staff on duty in the Dean's office. They must obey the adult while traveling and at the activity. In a case where the state vehicle is full, permission to attend an activity will be denied to a day student before it is denied to a residential student.

Day students are responsible for transportation to or from their home.

Parents of day students wishing after school care and/or participation in cottage activities for their child **MUST** contact the Dean of Students to determine if this is possible.

SIGNING IN AND SIGNING OUT PROCEDURES

All visitors and guests at the cottages are expected to sign in at the cottage office.

All residential students are expected to sign out whenever they leave the campus. (Sign out forms are located in each cottage.) Younger students are to be signed out by their houseparents or the adult that is taking them off campus. Students at the Junior High and Senior High level are responsible for signing out for themselves after they have obtained permission from their houseparents. **All students must sign out.**

Families are welcome to visit the cottage program. When visiting, please familiarize yourself with our visitor information sheet that will be posted in each bedroom on a bulletin board and in the kitchen

area of each cottage wing.

PROGRESSIVE EARNING OF PRIVILEGES

Participation in both on and off campus activities is a privilege. Students earn the privilege of participating in activities. They must demonstrate the ability to behave in an appropriate manner, cooperate with staff on a daily basis, and understand the basic rules at MSDB.

As students demonstrate an ability to manage themselves, they will be given more opportunities to use self reliance and independence. If a student demonstrates a self-centered attitude and a lack of respect for the others, privileges will be lost.

Freedom is based on responsibility, maturity, and respect. Students who demonstrate these qualities are better able to profit from their educational experience at MSDB.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

All residential students are encouraged to take part in the cottage work study program in order to earn an allowance. This program gives them the opportunity to earn their own spending money and learn about the responsibilities of having a job.

It is possible for students in High School to participate in part-time on and off campus employment. This occurs only on an approved and closely monitored basis. Students must maintain a "C" average in school and exhibit an appropriate level of maturity and dependability. They must also have parental permission to work off-campus. Transportation to and from off campus employment is arranged on a case by case basis.

STUDENT BANK

As a service to our students, the cottage maintains a student bank. This system is divided into two separate accounts. The portion labeled "parent account" includes all money that has been deposited by parents for that account. The portion labeled "student account" includes all funds that the student earns for themselves from their participation in the Work Study Program either on campus or from outside employment and from all other sources unless specifically designated for the "parent account".

Students are permitted to withdraw funds from the "parent account" only with permission from their parents. If parents wish for their child to have access to this money on an "allowance" basis, a record will be kept at the student bank and they will be limited to the amount established by their parents.

Students are permitted to withdraw funds from the "student account" during assigned and posted hours. Limits on the amount of money available to a student from the "student account" are placed only when this is the express wish of their parents and a notation to this effect has been placed in the student's file.

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to use the student bank. The school is not responsible for any money that is lost or stolen while in the student's possession. Cottage banking hours are set at the beginning of each school year.

TELEPHONE/CELL PHONE USAGE

The school provides residential students with the opportunity to call home once a week (long distance) at no charge to the parents. A schedule is developed at the beginning of each school year and a log is kept of all long distance calls made by students.

Because of the large number of students who use the phone (including the video phone) and because campus phones are primarily considered “business lines”, students should limit their calls to a reasonable length of time. Interpreter services are available as needed for those students making calls either with school interpreters or via video relay interpreter.

Students may have and use cellular phones, pagers, and other electronic signaling devices or calling devices with the permission of the Superintendent, Principal, Dean of Students or designee. Students are not allowed to use a cell phone, pager, electronic signaling device or calling device during any activities in the cottage program (such as Cottage Homework Connection (CHC), chores, special activities and meal times). All devices must be turned off prior to going to bed at night (failure to do so may result in the device being locked up in the counselor’s office during the nighttime hours).

At no time shall any student operate a cellular phone or other electronic device with video capabilities (i.e.: camera phone) in any locker room, bathroom, or other location where it would violate the privacy right of another person. Unauthorized use will result in confiscation of the device by school officials, including houseparents, and may result in disciplinary action. Confiscated devices may be returned, at the discretion of the administration, to the parent or guardian of the student or to the student.

Inappropriate use of the device will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

1st offense – warning

2nd offense – no privileges for one day

3rd offense – no privileges for one week

4th offense – no privileges for one quarter (new signed permission)

Parents will be notified on the second offense.

USE OF VIDEO GAMES, PERSONAL TV’S, DVD PLAYERS AND OTHER ENTERTAINMENT DEVICES

It is the desire of the residential program to make the environment as “homelike” as possible.

However, there are some instances where what may be allowable in the home may not exist in the cottage program to the same degree. The staff has found it rather difficult at times to monitor these devices resulting in conflicts with students regarding the appropriate use of these items. It is not uncommon for a student to be watching TV or playing a game during quiet hour or refusing to turn off the game and go to bed. These games and TV’s tend to create problems for the students getting behind in their school work creating another source of conflict between students and staff.

Additionally, we have found many students will not socialize with others and want to spend all their time in their rooms playing games or watching TV alone. The administration and staff want students to spend their time in a healthy and productive manner – spending all their free time in front of the TV or playing video games is not healthy nor is it productive. The following guidelines have been established for use of Video Games, Personal TV’s, DVD Players and other Entertainment Devices:

1. Each cottage wing will have a room or area set-up for the use of games (Play Station, Xbox, etc.). This area will be supervised by the cottage staff.
2. Students may bring their game set-ups and play during established "Game Room" times.
3. Students will be able to play on their own game station.
4. Students may bring games from home to be played in the Game Room.
5. The games may be kept in their rooms.
6. Games rated "M" (mature) or "Adult" are not permitted in the cottage program.
 - If these items are found they will be confiscated until the next travel home or when the parent is able to take the item home.
7. Students are not permitted to have a Game Station set-up in their room.
8. Students are not permitted to have a TV in their room.
9. Students are not permitted to have a portable DVD player in their room.
 - If these items are found they will be confiscated until the next travel home or when the parent is able to take the item home.
10. Each cottage wing will have at least one TV/VCR/DVD for the students use.
11. Movies rated PG-13 and lower are permitted in the cottage program (student must be 13 years of age to view the PG-13 movies).
12. Students may bring videos from home for viewing in the cottage program.
 - Movies rated "R" will be confiscated until the next travel home or when the parent is able to take the item home.
13. Students are required to mark their games, DVD's, videos for proof of ownership.

Students will be permitted to have the following items as long as it does not interfere with their study hour, bedtime or chores. Failure to do so will result in loss of privileges and item may be confiscated.

- Students may have personal stereo's (boom boxes, IPod's, Discman's, etc.) in their rooms.
- Students may have a handheld (Game Boy) game in their room.
- Students may have a musical instrument in their room.

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CLOTHING

All students should be provided with enough clothing to get them through at least a week. Students at the Middle School and High School are required to care for their own clothing (including doing their own wash according to an established schedule). Towels and bedding (including blankets, pillows, and bedspreads) are provided by MSDB. Students are expected to provide their own toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, and other personal items.

Students are required to have robes and slippers in case of a fire or fire drill. While in the Food Service building, students are required to wear shoes and shirts. Because of frequent visits to cottage areas by tours, and families, students are required to be properly dressed at all times while in the living areas of the cottages.

ROOM DECORATIONS

Students are permitted to place pictures, art work, or other decorations on the tack panels in their rooms. Under no circumstances are students to make nail or tack holes. Houseparents should be consulted if there are any questions.

DATING AND OFF CAMPUS REGULATIONS

Students are permitted to date with the consent of their parents and the approval of the Dean of Students. Requests for dating privileges are to be made to the Dean of Students three days before the date. (It is understood that special events may occur making shorter notice necessary.)

Limitations are made on an individual basis and are determined by the student's maturity. Hours will vary depending on a student's age and grade level. Copies of regular dating hours are available to students and parents in the cottage office. Special occasions may require extension of these hours. Special requests are to be made to the Dean of Students. Failure to follow established off-campus rules could result in the loss of this privilege.

WEEKEND VISITS TO OTHER STUDENT'S HOMES

If a student wishes to visit another student's home, parents should make contact with each other and make the travel arrangements. They should let staff know the student's destination in writing.

Because the purpose of the "travel weekends" is for the student to visit family, no reimbursement will be made for students who travel to a destination other than home.

COTTAGE STUDENT COUNCIL

The Cottage Student Council has been in existence for several years. The purpose of this student group is to provide an opportunity for cottage students to have a voice in the planning of activities and other happenings in the cottage. The group typically has one major outing per year and also does one major "service project" per year. Service projects in the past have been preparing emergency bags for the American Red Cross and "Survival Road Kits" for the MSDB Outreach staff. The Lead Houseparents serve as the sponsors for this student group.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS PROGRAM

In their junior and senior year, students are eligible for membership in the Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP). Participation depends on acceptance by an Administrative Committee and is based on maturity, reliability, and readiness for a limited supervision experience. Eligible students must also have written consent from their parents. This program provides an opportunity for students to live in an environment with minimal supervision and maximum personal responsibility. Further information on specific requirements for participation and regulations for students who are accepted in ILSP is available through the counseling or cottage administrative staff.