



# **MOUNT PLEASANT**

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## **INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

**2025 - 2026**

**Every Child Has Every Chance to Learn**

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## INTRODUCTION AND NOTICES

Welcome—or welcome back—to Mount Pleasant ISD. The purpose of this Employee Handbook is to inform you of important information about your employment in the district and about working with students of the Mount Pleasant ISD. This Handbook does not replace the school district's board-adopted policy manual, which contains all the official policies that govern the operation of the district and your employment in the district. However, the information, rules, and standards set out in this Handbook are also expectations for conduct and performance. This Handbook is not a “contract,” and we can make changes to it at any time.

Nothing in this Handbook supersedes or contradicts any district policy or changes any aspect of the employment relationship between you and the district or any terms and conditions of that relationship. All district employees serve on an at-will basis unless they have received, signed, and returned a written contract authorized by the board of trustees or a written employment agreement authorized by the board of trustees or the superintendent.

We have tried to make this Handbook easy to read and understand. When we say “you” or “your,” we mean the employee; when we say “we” or “our,” we mean the school district.

The District Employee Handbook and Board adopted policies are available on the District's website at [www.mpid.net](http://www.mpid.net). A copy of the handbook is also available in the campus office for review.

**NOTE:** Employees whose English reading skills are limited may call 903-575-2000 and speak with a Spanish- speaking employee who may assist with an interpretation of provisions of this *Employee Handbook*.

**NOTA: Los empleados cuyo conocimiento del inglés es limitado pueden llamar al 903-575-2000 y hablar con un empleado que hable español el cual les traducirá las estipulaciones del Folleto de Empleados.**

## Personal Information Election

Texas Government Code, Section 552.024, states that “each employee or official of a governmental body and each former employee or official of a governmental body shall choose whether to allow public access to the information in the custody of the governmental body relating to the person’s home address, home telephone number, emergency contact information, or social security number, or that reveals whether the person has family members.”

You completed a document similar to this upon hire. If you wish to change your selection, please complete the selection below by indicating whether you wish your home address, home telephone number, or information that reveals whether you have family members to be disclosed to the public by the school district. We will not provide your social security number to any member of the public.

I wish to allow public access to

- my home address;
- my home telephone number;
- emergency contact information;
- information that reveals whether I have family members; or
- none of the items listed above.

---

Signature

---

Printed Name

---

Date

## MPISD CALENDAR

# 2025-2026

July-25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August-25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September-25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October-25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November-25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1		
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December-25						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

 Staff Development/Workday  
 Holiday  
 Student Early Release

### Aug-25

8-18 Staff Development/Workday  
19 First Day of School

### Sep-25

1 Labor Day Holiday  
19 5th-12th Grading Period Ends (23 days)  
26 Staff Development

Oct-25

10 Holiday  
13 Columbus Day Holiday  
17 K-4th Grading Period Ends (40 days)  
30 5th-12th Grading Period Ends (26 days)  
31 Staff Development Day

### Nov-25

21 Student Early Release  
24-28 Thanksgiving Holidays

### Dec-25

19 Student Early Release  
19 5th-12th Grading Period Ends (30 days)  
19 K-4th Grading Period Ends (39 days)  
22-31 Christmas Holidays

Jan-26

1-2 Christmas Holiday  
5 Staff Development  
6 Second Semester Begins  
19 MLK Holiday  
30 Student Early Release

### Feb-26

13 Holiday  
16 President's Day Holiday  
20 5th-12th Grading Period Ends (31 days)

### Mar-26

13 K-4th Grading Period Ends (46 days)  
13 Student Early Release  
16-20 Spring Break

### Apr-26

3 Good Friday Holiday  
10 5th-12th Grading Period Ends (29 days)

### May-26

1 Student Early Release  
21 Student Early Release  
21 Last Day of School  
21 5th-12th Grading Period Ends (29 days)  
21 K-4th Grading Period Ends (43 days)  
21 Elementary Report Cards  
22 Staff Development  
22 Graduation  
25 Memorial Day Holiday  
28 Secondary Report Cards

January-26						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February-26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

March-26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April-26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May-26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June-26						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Days
1st Semester
79
2nd Semester
89
Total
168
Staff Dev/Work Days*
11
Total Days
179

\*Two days are extended to count as 1 day

# **Board and Administration Information**

*Policies BA, BB series, BD series, and BE series*

Texas law grants the Board of Trustees the power to govern and oversee the management of the District's schools. The Board is the policy-making body within the District and has overall responsibility for the curriculum, school taxes, annual budget, employment of the superintendent and other professional staff, facilities, and expansions. The Board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal law and regulations.

The Board of Trustees is elected by the citizens of the District to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the District's children. Trustees are elected at-large and serve three-year terms. Trustees serve without compensation, are registered voters, and must reside in the district.

Mount Pleasant ISD Board members:

Yvonne Hampton	President
Buddy Blue	Vice President
Dr. Kenny Thompson	Secretary
Luke Anderson	Member
Sandy Bible	Member
Kim Crabb	Member
Juan Duenez	Member

The Board usually meets monthly on the fourth Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the District, located in the Administration Building at 2230 North Edwards. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted at the District's Administration Offices at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

All meetings are open to the public. In certain circumstances, Texas law permits the Board to go into a closed session and the public is excluded. Closed session may occur for such things as discussing prospective gifts or donations, real property acquisition, personnel issues including conferences with employees and employee complaints, security matters, student discipline, or to consult with attorneys regarding pending litigation.

## **Administration**

Superintendent of Schools  
Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum  
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services  
Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources  
Chief Financial Officer  
Director of Technology  
Director of Titus County Shared Services  
Director of Assessments  
Director of Athletics  
Director of State/Federal Programs  
Director of Bilingual/ESL Services  
Director of Instructional Support  
Director of Maintenance & Operations  
Interim Director of Food Service  
Director of Communication  
Director of Fine Arts  
District Police Chief

Judd Marshall  
Michael Lide  
Dustin Cook  
Craig Bailey  
Audra Walker  
Noe Arzate  
Justin Chambers  
Shelley Derrick  
Joey Cluley  
Shirley Peterson  
Eva Beles  
Michelle Luck  
Russell Luck  
Pamela Jennings  
Kelly Cowan  
Theodus Luckett, III  
Ronnie Humphrey

## **Principals**

Mount Pleasant High School  
Mount Pleasant Junior High School  
Wallace Middle School  
Frances Corpew Elementary  
Annie Sims Elementary  
E.C. Brice Elementary  
Vivian Fowler Elementary  
Headstart/Early Childhood  
Alternative Education Programs  
DAEP

Jason Adams  
Rusty Duke  
Nathan Rider  
Karen Williams  
Jeannie Jaggers  
Amanda Jones  
Carrie McMinn  
Jamie Cook  
Kelli Glenn  
Hayes Lesher

## School Directory

<b>Mount Pleasant High School (9-12)</b>	<b>2110 North Edwards</b>	<b>903-575-2020</b>
Principal	Jason Adams	
CTE Director	Jay Silman	
Assistant Principals	Joshua Blackstone	Cudahy Harmon
Counselors	Jerilyn Goolsby	Madia Arrerdondo
		Kristy Ciuba
		Wendy Gonzalez
		Jonathan Cardenas
		Todd Burns
<b>Mount Pleasant Junior High School (7-8)</b>	<b>2801 Old Paris Road</b>	<b>903-575-2110</b>
Principal	Rusty Duke	
Assistant Principals	Norberto Ortero	Kristi Berry
Counselors	Candice Majors	Jerry Brannen
		Blair Davis
<b>Wallace Middle School (5-6)</b>	<b>301 Dunn Street</b>	<b>903-575-2040</b>
Principal	Nathan Rider	
Assistant Principals	Keith Shelton	Jennifer Stovall
Counselors	Karla Palmer-Coker	
<b>Frances Corprew Intermediate School (K-4)</b>	<b>909 School Street</b>	<b>903-575-2050</b>
Principal	Karen Williams	
Assistant Principals	Tiffani Powell	Donna Smith
Counselor	Cassie George	
<b>Vivian Fowler Elementary School (K-4)</b>	<b>502 North O'Tyson</b>	<b>903-575-2070</b>
Principal	Carrie McMinn	
Assistant Principal	Ritchell De La Hoya	
Counselor	Debra Williamson	
<b>E.C. Brice Elementary School (K-4)</b>	<b>311 Cedar</b>	<b>903-575-2057</b>
Principal	Amanda Jones	
Assistant Principal	Amy Eubanks	
Counselor	Chelsea Loftin	
<b>Annie Sims Elementary (K-4)</b>	<b>1801 East First Street</b>	<b>903-575-2062</b>
Principal	Jeannie Pat Jaggers	
Assistant Principal	Lexi Litke	
Counselor	Sarah Conley	
<b>MPISD Child Development Center (PreK, Head Start)</b>	<b>1602 W. Ferguson</b>	<b>903-575-2092</b>
Principal/ Exec. Dir.	Jamie Cook	Early Head Start Dir.
		Katie Fite
<b>Titus County Shared Services</b>	<b>2230 North Edwards</b>	<b>903-575-2079</b>
Director	Justin Chambers	Assistant Director
		Stacie Fitts
<b>Alternative Education Programs –ALC/DAEP</b>	<b>2110 North Edwards</b>	<b>903-434-8770</b>
ALC Principal	Kelli Glenn	DAEP Principal
		Hayes Lesher

## **Mission Statement**

### *Policy AE*

The Mount Pleasant Independent School District has high expectations for all students. The District will make every effort to attract and retain the most qualified teachers available who will enhance the positive image of its schools in the community.

Communication between schools, administration, school board, community, families, and students will be open and honest and constantly improving. Staff, parents, and community will be given an opportunity to be involved in decision-making as the District works together through the Accelerated Schools process. These combined efforts will continue to make MPISD the best school District in the state of Texas.

- **Vision: Every Child Has Every Chance To Learn**
- **Mission: To graduate students with the ability to Read, Think and Communicate**

## **Equal Opportunity Employer**

### *Policies DAA, DIA*

Mount Pleasant ISD is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, military status, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law.

The District's Title IX Coordinator and Section 504 / ADA Coordinator is Mike Lide, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum. Contact information: 2230 N. Edwards, Mt. Pleasant, TX 75455, (903) 575-2000, [mlide@mpisd.net](mailto:mlide@mpisd.net). Reports may be made at any time and by any person by mail, email, or phone. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person. Employees with disabilities may contact the ADA coordinator to initiate interactive reasonable accommodation plans when necessary or appropriate.

## **Right of Association**

All employees enjoy the right of association and are free to participate or not participate in professional or political organizations of their own choosing. No district administrator will require or coerce you to participate or not participate in any professional or political organization, make or refrain from making a charitable contribution, or attend a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions. No employment-related decisions will be made based on participation or nonparticipation in any professional or political organization or the decision or make or not make a charitable contribution.

School facilities and equipment, however, cannot be used for any political or partisan purpose, except as authorized by the principal or superintendent under

district policy. We also will not permit partisan political activity or campaigning by employees in the classroom or other instructional settings or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned activities or events, including wearing campaign buttons.

## **Job Vacancy Announcements**

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis to the district's website.

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYMENT IN MOUNT PLEASANT ISD**

## **Personnel Records**

We will maintain records about you at both the campus and central administrative offices. You have the responsibility to make sure that all required records, including your official service record, certificates, licenses, professional development records, and the like are submitted to the appropriate offices when requested. If you have a name or address change during the school year, you must notify the Human Resources Dept. and your campus office within five days. We will use the address and phone number on file to contact you with official communications, so it is critical that you keep these numbers up to date.

Under the Texas Public Information Act and because you are a public employee, **most of the records we have and keep related to your employment, including your salary, are available to anyone upon written request.** Employees may direct that their home addresses, emergency contact information, and telephone numbers not be released by completing the form, "Personal Information Election," at the beginning of this Handbook. Official written evaluations for teachers and administrators and other documents that evaluate teachers or administrators are confidential and will not be released. If we receive a request for copies of your personnel records, we will consult with the school's attorneys to determine which records must be released and will take the necessary steps under the Public Information Act to withhold records that are confidential. Additional information may be found in *Policy GBA (LEGAL)*.

Professional employees who obtain additional certification while employed with the District must provide copies of those certificates to the Human Resources office. If you agree to obtain additional certification at our request, you must submit transcripts and certification testing registration forms and test results related to that additional certification to the Human Resources office.

We will maintain the following personnel records at the central administrative offices:

### **All Employees**

- Application
- References
- Signed employee notices, including Drug-free Workplace
- Completed I-9 Form
- Completed W-4 Form
- Teacher Retirement System enrollment form
- Copy of social security card
- Notice of reasonable assurance (noncontract employees only)
- Evaluations, directives, reprimands
- Employee leave requests and approvals
- Service record and any required attachments

### **Professional Employees**

- Credentials (valid Texas certificate or permit)
- Official college transcripts
- Employee-signed contract of employment or employment agreement, if applicable
- Teaching schedule, job description, or other assignment record
- Evaluations, directives, reprimands

### **Educational Assistants**

- Certification
- Transcripts of any college work
- Job description or other assignment record

Employees may be subject to a review of their criminal history record information at any time during employment. National criminal history checks based on an individual's fingerprints, photo, and other identification will be conducted on employees and entered into the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Clearinghouse. This database provides the District and SBEC with access to an employee's current national criminal history and updates to the employee's subsequent criminal history.

## **Certification and Licenses**

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification, or a professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to MPISD HR Department in a timely manner. Employees licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (TDLR) must notify Debra Malone, Deputy Superintendent, when there is action against, or revocation of, their license.

A certified employee's contract may be voided without Chapter 21 due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact MPISD HR Department if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

## **Recertification of Employment Authorization**

At the time of hire all employees must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) and present documents to verify identity and employment authorization.

Employees whose immigration status, employment authorization, or employment authorization documents have expired must present new documents that show current employment authorization. Employees should file the necessary application or petition sufficiently in advance to ensure that they maintain continuous employment authorization or valid employment authorization documents. Contact Mercedes Marroquin, HR Coordinator, if you have any questions regarding reverification of employment authorization.

## **Attendance and Absences**

*Policy DEC (LEGAL) and (LOCAL)*

Punctual and consistent attendance at work is a fundamental requirement of your employment in Mount Pleasant ISD. **Excessive absences or repeated tardiness in reporting for duty can result in the termination of your employment.** “Excessive” absences are any that are not in compliance with our policies and procedures for taking available local, state, or federal leave. If you are going to be absent or late for work, you must contact your immediate supervisor by the time designated by your supervisor. This contact must be made every time you are absent or late unless you have provided the Deputy Superintendent of HR with more specific long-term information from your treating health care provider. Also, exceeding earned paid leave without this information and/or absence approval is considered excessive.

We do not have a category of leave called “leave without pay.” If you are absent in excess of the number of days of paid leave you have available under district policy, you are simply absent and will not be paid for those days. Employees who are paid on a salary basis will have appropriate deductions made from the regular salary payment for absences in excess of accumulated leave. You must submit an absence request through Red Rover, our absence tracking system, for every absence from duty, including professional leave. If you do not comply with our policies and procedure for notice of an absence or for requesting leave, you will not be paid for those days of absence even if you have leave available.

An employee absent three or more consecutive workdays because of personal illness shall submit, upon return to work, a medical certification of illness from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and the employee’s fitness to return to work. An employee absent three or more consecutive workdays because of illness in the immediate family shall present, upon return to work, medical certification of the family member’s illness. Employees must follow District and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence.

If an employee has any paid leave available, including vacation, it must be used during an absence. There are some exceptions to this so if you do not wish to utilize paid leave during an absence, you must contact the Benefits Manager to verify if you qualify for an exception.

### **Basic Leave Information**

The complete text of the policy on leaves and absences may be found in *DEC (LEGAL) and (LOCAL), and DECA (LEGAL)*, but we are providing a brief summary of the most commonly used kinds of leaves in this Handbook.

All full-time employees receive five days of state personal leave each year. Those who work less than a full year receive a pro-rated number of days. Additionally, the district provides 2 days of local leave each year. Local sick leave time shall accumulate to a maximum of 40 equivalent workdays. Employees called to active military duty may use available local sick leave days in addition to other leave opportunities. Refer to DEC (LOCAL) for specifics on using each kind of leave. You may use accumulated state or local leave for your personal illness or injury or the illness or injury of an immediate family member.

Days taken as “personal leave” must be requested 10 days in advance and approved by the supervising administrator or designee. We will try always to honor timely requests for personal leave that comply with policy requirements, but your principal or supervisor may withdraw approval if unforeseeable absences among other staff (bad weather, flu or other transmittable disease) would affect the efficient and effective operation of the campus or department. The availability of substitutes and impact on the instructional program or department will also be considered by the principal or supervisor. Personal leave will be subject to the following limitations:

A maximum of 10 campus employees will be permitted to take personal leave at the same time.

It may not last for more than two consecutive workdays except with special approval for extenuating circumstances.

**Personal leave may not be taken on the following days:**

The day immediately preceding or following a scheduled holiday

Days scheduled for end-of-semester or end-of-year exams

Days scheduled for STAAR or other state-mandated tests

Days of scheduled teacher in-service or teacher workdays

Any unapproved absences or absences beyond accumulated or available leave shall result in deduction from the employee's pay.

**Partial Days**

Leave shall be recorded in whole and half workdays only, except in accordance with provisions for intermittent leave in the Family and Medical Leave Act. An employee who must leave their duties prior to being on duty the first two hours of their normal workday will have one whole workday charged against their leave balance. Working all but two hours of the workday will result in one half workday being charged against the employee's leave balance.

**Family Medical Leave**

The following text is from the federal notice, *Employee Rights and Responsibilities Under the Family and Medical Leave Act*. Specific information that the district has adopted to implement the FMLA follows this general notice.

**Leave Entitlements**

Eligible employees who work for a covered employer can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the following reasons:

- The birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- To bond with a child (leave must be taken within 1 year of the child's birth or placement);
- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a qualifying serious health condition;

- For the employee's own qualifying serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job;
- For qualifying exigencies related to the foreign deployment of a military member who is the employee's spouse, child, or parent.

An eligible employee who is a covered service member's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin may also take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the servicemember with a serious injury or illness.

An employee does not need to use leave in one block. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, employees may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule.

Employees may choose, or an employer may require, use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. If an employee substitutes accrued paid leave for FMLA leave, the employee must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

### **Benefits and Protections**

While employees are on FMLA leave, employers must continue health insurance coverage as if the employees were not on leave.

Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to the same job or one nearly identical to it with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions.

An employer may not interfere with an individual's FMLA rights or retaliate against someone for using or trying to use FMLA leave, opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA, or being involved in any proceeding under or related to the FMLA.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

An employee who works for a covered employer must meet three criteria in order to be eligible for FMLA leave. The employee must:

- Have worked for the employer for at least 12 months;
- Have at least 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months before taking leave\*; and
- Work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the employee's worksite.

\*Special hours of service eligibility requirements apply to airline flight crew employees.

## **Requesting Leave**

Generally, employees must give 30-days' advance notice of the need for FMLA leave. If it is not possible to give 30-days' notice, an employee must notify the employer as soon as possible and, generally, follow the employer's usual procedures. Employees do not have to share a medical diagnosis but must provide enough information to the employer so it can determine if the leave qualifies for FMLA protection.

Sufficient information could include informing an employer that the employee is or will be unable to perform his or her job functions, that a family member cannot perform daily activities, or that hospitalization or continuing medical treatment is necessary. Employees must inform the employer if the need for leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

Employers can require a certification or periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. If the employer determines that the certification is incomplete, it must provide a written notice indicating what additional information is required.

## **Employer Responsibilities**

Once an employer becomes aware that an employee's need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, the employer must notify the employee if he or she is eligible for FMLA leave and, if eligible, must also provide a notice of rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. (*This is posted notice.*) If the employee is not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for ineligibility.

Employers must notify their employees if leave will be designated as FMLA leave, and if so, how much leave will be designated as FMLA leave.

## **Employee Responsibilities and Additional FML Information**

All communications about chronic, serious, or recurring health conditions for you or an immediate family member must be directed to the MPISD Benefits and Human Resources Offices to ensure you receive the benefits to which you are entitled and to protect the confidentiality of the medical information you provide to us.

When you can foresee the need for family medical leave, such as for childbirth, scheduled surgery, or scheduled medical treatments, you must notify MPISD Human Resources and request the leave at least 30 days in advance. If 30 days' notice is not possible, you must inform us of the need for leave at least two working days before the leave. In emergencies when the need for family medical leave is not foreseeable, you or a close family member must notify us of the need for family medical leave as soon as practicable, generally on the same day that you are aware of the need for family medical leave or the next business day.

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period

- beginning on the first duty day of the school year

## **Use of Paid Leave**

FML runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leave, compensatory time, assault leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. The district will designate the leave as FML, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently. Teachers have the option of not using paid leave during an FML absence for pregnancy or birth or adoption of a child.

## **Combined Leave for Spouses**

Spouses who are employed by the district are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of FML to care for a parent with a serious health condition; or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. Military caregiver leave for spouses is limited to a combined total of 26 weeks.

## **Reinstatement**

An employee returning to work at the end of FML will be returned to the same position held when the leave began or to an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

- In certain cases, instructional employees desiring to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue on family and medical leave until the end of the semester. The additional time off is not counted against the employee's FML entitlement, and the district will maintain the employee's group health insurance and reinstate the employee at the end of the leave according to the procedures outlined in policy (see DECA (LEGAL)).

## **Failure to Return**

If, at the expiration of FML, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the district may require the employee to reimburse the district's share of insurance premiums paid during any portion of FML when the employee was on unpaid leave.

Our policy requires concurrent use of family medical leave with all other kinds of leave, so some or all of your family medical leave may be with pay, depending on how much leave you have accumulated. If you are using family medical leave, we will communicate directly with you about the details of your absence.

## **Medical Certification**

We have the right to and will ask you to provide periodic information from your treating doctor to verify the need for family medical leave or other medical absences and to give us some idea of when you will be able to return to duty. We will provide forms for your doctor to complete. A medical release to return to duty

will also be required. Your failure to provide the necessary information to us can affect your eligibility for leave and will be treated as a failure to follow district policy and procedures.

### **Medical Examinations**

We have the right to and will ask you to have a medical or psychological examination paid for by the district if we believe that your condition is interfering with the performance of your regular duties or that you are a health or safety risk to yourself or others. Your failure to cooperate in this situation will be treated as a failure to follow district policy and comply with directives.

### **Sick Leave Pool**

A sick leave pool is a voluntary donation of state days by employees to assist a fellow employee who, after exhausting all paid leave, has an illness or disability, or has an immediate family member who has an illness or disability and there is not another family member to provide care. Employees in need of donated days should initiate the request with their campus principal, who will then submit a written request to the Superintendent. Employees wishing to begin a sick leave pool for a fellow employee should also initiate the request with the campus principal. Once the pool has been established, volunteers may then donate state leave days to the pool.

The following restrictions shall apply to the establishment and use of a sick leave pool:

- Employees may donate no more than two state leave days each school year
- An eligible employee may draw from the pool until he or she has used up to 60 days in any school year
- The sick leave pool may be accessed by an individual employee only once each school year
- The sick leave pool will remain open for contributions for a period of 30 days

The pool shall cease to exist when the employee has used 60 days, or voluntary donations reach the two-day maximum contribution and the sick leave pool is exhausted. Unused sick leave pool days shall revert back to donors and shall be divided proportionately among individuals according to the number of sick days initially contributed.

### **On-the-Job Injuries**

If you are injured while performing your duties for the district, you must notify your supervisor immediately so that we can comply with our responsibilities under workers' compensation laws. We provide workers' compensation coverage for all employees. If an injury at work causes you to be absent, it is your responsibility to inform us whether you wish to use accumulated leave in order to receive full pay during your absence to the extent of accumulated leave or whether you wish to save your accumulated leave and receive only the temporary income benefits that are

available under the workers' compensation laws. **If you do not inform us of your choice, we will NOT charge your absence to accumulated leave and you will receive only temporary income benefits.** If absence because of a work-related injury also qualifies as a serious health condition under family medical leave, you will also be charged with family medical leave during your absence.

Once an employee's Workers' Compensation claim has been filed and approved, employees shall contact and provide information to the MPISD Benefits Office about pertinent services related to the claim.

### **Administrative Leave**

The superintendent, or superintendent's designee, can order that any employee be placed on administrative leave, usually with pay, when he/she determines that it is in the district's best interest to do so.

### **Jury Duty**

For each regularly scheduled work hour during which a nonsalaried employee serves in any phase of jury service, the District shall pay the employee the employee's normal daily/hourly compensation. Any employee's accumulated personal leave may not be reduced because of the employee's service in compliance with a summons to appear as a juror.

Employees must present documentation of the service.

An affidavit showing time served on a jury will be issued by the court after jury service. If an employee is released by the court two or more hours prior to their normal quitting time, the employee must return to work. If the employee does not return to work, they will be charged personal leave accordingly. All monies received for jury duty will be retained by the employee.

Employees will be granted paid leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding for District business. Other absences for court appearances related to an employee's personal business must be taken as personal leave or leave without pay (if no personal leave is available). Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

### **Leave for Peace Officers**

A District peace officer who experiences a traumatic event in the scope of employment shall be granted mental health leave according to *Policy DEC (LOCAL)*.

A District peace officer will be granted leave when ordered by the local health authority or the peace officer's supervisor to quarantine or isolate due to exposure to a communicable disease while on duty. *See Policy DEC (LOCAL)*

### **Vacations and Holidays**

Only at-will or support employees, including directors of support departments serving under a contract, in 12-month positions receive up to 10 days of paid vacation per school year. We encourage eligible employees to schedule and take vacation they have earned.

If you are in a position eligible for vacation, you will earn paid vacation days at the rate of 0.83 per month. You are not eligible to take paid vacation until you have completed 2 months of employment. Vacation must be scheduled at least 10 days in advance with your supervisor who may consider the needs of the district and other scheduled absences in approving requests for vacation. The maximum number of vacation days that you can accumulate is 25.

For those with release days, a maximum of 20 may be accumulated. Days for vacation, release, personal, and sick will be added at the beginning of each school year on the first day teachers are required to be in attendance. Since adding days will affect the leave balance, it is important to keep this date in mind for the maximum accumulated days allowed. For reference:

- 9/1
- 11/27
- 11/28
- 12/24
- 12/25
- 1/1
- 1/19
- 2/16
- 4/3
- 5/25
- 7/2

### **Compensation, Benefits, and Pay Systems**

*Policies DEA, DEAA*

The board of trustees annually will adopt or approve salary and pay systems for all classes of employees in conjunction with the annual budget adoption process. Non-exempt employees are paid based on the hours worked within a pay period; contractual or exempt employees are paid on a monthly salary basis. The superintendent will make decisions about where to assign individual employees within the ranges and positions set in the systems.

MPISD has implemented the Employee Access Center (EAC) to provide payroll and leave information to each employee. Employees are able to access wages,

certification, benefits and other information at any time. We encourage staff to view this information at the beginning of the year for their anticipated pay rate and exempt or non-exempt classification for purposes of providing overtime or compensatory time. **This notice is not a contract; it is provided for your information only.** If we discover during the school year that either you or we made an error in that information, we will make adjustments to remaining salary or pay to correct the error. This correction during the payment term may increase or decrease your regular pay check.

We pay employees monthly on the 20th. As a benefit to employees, we provide direct deposit for your pay checks. A notification period of one month is necessary to activate this service. **Your first check and the last check due to you will be a standard “paper check”** and may be picked up at the District's Administrative Offices. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than you, the District employee named on the check, without your written authorization.

The schedule of pay dates for the school year follows:

September 19, 2025	January 20, 2026	May 20, 2026
October 20, 2025	February 20, 2026	June 18, 2026
November 20, 2025	March 13, 2026	July 16, 2026
December 18, 2025	April 20, 2026	August 20, 2026

As a benefit to our employees and to provide a measure of predictability for employees' personal budgeting purposes, we will calculate or estimate an expected monthly pay for all employees, whether employed by contract for a specific amount of money over the entire term or employed on an at-will basis at an hourly rate of pay. If you are under a contract or work calendar for fewer than 12 months or in a position that does not require you to provide active service for 12 months of the year, we will set aside a portion of that monthly pay each month to provide a regular paycheck during the one or two months in the summer that you are not actively working. This is known as annualizing compensation. Each month, however, we will compare your estimated monthly pay with the number of hours or days actually worked, including days of paid leave in accordance with district policy, and will make adjustments as necessary to ensure that you are paid correctly for time worked.

Before a paycheck can be issued to a new employee, all required forms must be completed and on file with the Payroll and Human Resources Departments.

### **Overtime Compensation**

If you are an employee who is covered by the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, you must keep accurate records of all time worked for the district. This means that you must clock in through the

Kronos timekeeping system that we provide, the actual time that you begin work each day, the time you take for lunch, and the time you stop working each day. We generally expect that non-exempt employees will not work more than 40 hours in a work week. Our work week begins at 12:00 a.m. on Sunday and ends at 11:59 p.m. on Saturday.

**All overtime must be approved in advance by your supervisor. Working overtime without prior authorization is insubordination and may result in the termination of your employment.**

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Employees who must work beyond their normal schedule but less than 40 hours per week will be compensated in straight-time pay or equivalent time off in the same workweek. Employees must work more than 40 total hours in a week to earn overtime compensation.

If the District is closed due to unforeseen circumstances, such as bad weather, and employees work when they are not required to do so, overtime will not be paid. Remember, a supervisor must approve a change in hours worked. This includes working on unscheduled or cancelled workdays.

### **Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk**

The district supports the practice of expressing breast milk and makes reasonable accommodations for the needs of employees who express breast milk. A place, other than a multiple user bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from other employees and the public where the employee can express breast milk will be provided.

A reasonable amount of break time will be provided when the employee has a need to express milk. For nonexempt employees, these breaks are unpaid and are not counted as hours worked. Employees should meet with their supervisor to discuss their needs and arrange break times.

### **Insurance**

#### *Policy CR series*

Information will be shared through email with all staff at the beginning of each school year to provide information about the insurance programs that are available to you, including optional coverage for long-term and short-term disability, additional group life insurance, vision, dental, and cancer coverage. We make a contribution to the basic health coverage for all eligible employees and will make this contribution so long as you are using accumulated paid leave or family medical leave. If you have an illness or injury that exhausts all paid and family medical leave, you may continue to participate in our health insurance for a limited time by paying your own premiums in advance. At the end of that time, you will be offered the opportunity to pay for continuation coverage.

The District's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the Mount Pleasant ISD Board of Trustees. Employees eligible for health insurance coverage include the following:

- Employees who are active, contributing TRS members
- Employees who are not contributing TRS members and who are regularly scheduled to work at least 10 hours per week. (These employees must pay entire premium. We do not contribute anything to their insurance.)

TRS retirees who are enrolled in TRS-Care (retiree health insurance program) and employees who are not contributing TRS members, who are regularly scheduled to work less than 10 hours per week, are not eligible to participate in TRS-ActiveCare. The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Employees should contact the MPISD Benefits Office for more information concerning changes and TRS enrollment guidelines.

### **Payroll Deductions**

*Policy CFEA*

We will make all required state and federal deductions from your gross pay each pay period. Deductions for the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) are required for all full-time employees. Temporary and part-time employees who are not eligible for TRS membership must have their 457 contributions deducted.

We will comply with any court order to deduct child support payments from your gross pay and with any valid orders to deduct federal school loan payments or pay a portion of your wages directly to the Internal Revenue Service. Other regular deductions may include:

- amounts that you are required to pay to maintain health insurance coverage for yourself and any dependents you have chosen to include in the district's health plan,
- amounts that you elect to pay for optional insurance coverage or additional investments,
- professional organization dues if you have requested us to make those payments.

All payroll deductions must be submitted in writing to the MPISD Benefits Office.

We provide a Section 125 Cafeteria Plan under federal tax laws that allows you to request that some regular and optional deductions be made from your gross salary before federal income withholding taxes are calculated. We will hold information sessions at the beginning of the school year to explain this program and give you the opportunity to make decisions and complete any paperwork necessary to participate. New employees must accept or reject this benefit during their first month of employment. All employees must accept or reject this benefit

on an annual basis and during the specified time period. You may contact the Benefits Office for more information.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

*Policies DEA, DK, DL*

All employees are subject to assignment and reassignment. At the campus level, the principal will ultimately determine your assignment. The superintendent can make assignments and reassignments between campuses and positions. Teachers may be assigned to any teaching assignment for which they are or can be qualified.

You will receive a copy of the job description for your assignment at the beginning of your employment or when your job description changes. Your principal or supervisor can assign additional duties if needed in order to make sure that the campus or department is running effectively and efficiently. Ordinarily, you will not receive any additional compensation for those duties, except as may be necessary to provide overtime for non-exempt employees.

The work day is not the same as the instructional day. Principals may set hours of work for employees that require you to be on duty before daily instruction begins and after daily instruction ends.

If you wish to leave campus during the school day for any reason other than taking a duty-free lunch, you must receive permission from the principal or your direct supervisor and sign out in the office indicating the time and purpose for leaving campus and sign in when you return.

## **Visitors to the Workplace**

*Policy GKC*

Any visitor for you during the working day must check in with the principal or supervisor and receive permission to go to your work site. Ordinarily we will not allow personal visitors to disrupt classroom instruction, so teachers should inform potential visitors of the time scheduled for a conference period or lunch period. We will not allow frequent or lengthy visits by friends or family to interfere with your performance of your assigned duties.

## **Duty-free Lunch**

All teachers and librarians will receive a 30-minute duty-free lunch at least four days each week. During this time, teachers and librarians have no responsibilities related to supervising students and may leave campus, provided they return within the allotted 30 minutes and follow appropriate checkout procedures through their campus office. If we are experiencing a personnel shortage, economic conditions that limit our ability to hire lunchroom monitors or support staff for this purpose, or in unforeseen circumstances, we may have to assign teachers and librarians to supervise students during their lunch no more than one day per week. We will

make efforts, though, to provide lunch room supervision using parent volunteers or support staff so that teachers and librarians can be provided a duty-free lunch each school day.

### **Faculty/Staff Meetings**

Your principal will periodically schedule meetings for all teachers and other professional staff and sometimes for all staff. These meetings will usually be in late afternoon after students have been released for the day. Important information about district and campus operation and programs at the campus is communicated in these meetings, which also provide an opportunity for employees to communicate ideas and issues to the administration. You must attend these meetings unless you have contacted the principal in advance and received permission to be absent.

### **Conference Period**

All teachers will receive a conference period of not less than 45 minutes for a total of 450 minutes within each two-week period. The purpose of the conference period is for teachers to plan and prepare instruction, to grade student work, to hold meetings with parents, and to hold meetings with students. We cannot require you to do anything else during your conference period; **however, you are required to use your conference period for those stated purposes.** You will not ordinarily be permitted to leave campus during your conference period to run errands, keep doctor or other appointments, or for any other purpose. Very occasionally, we may allow teachers to oversee another teacher's classroom during a conference period to provide for an unexpected absence or other administrative reason.

### **Employee Involvement: Site-Based Committee & Other Committees**

*Policy BQA, BQB*

At both the campus and district levels, Mount Pleasant ISD offers opportunities for input in matters that affect employees and influence the instructional effectiveness of the district. As part of the district's planning and decision-making process, employees are selected to serve on advisory committees, including the MPISD Site-Based committee. Please see your principal for more information.

### **Staff Development**

*Policy DMA*

A prepared, well-trained professional and instructional support staff is essential to our providing a quality education to all the students of Mt. Pleasant ISD. We have scheduled days of professional development into the annual calendar. On these days students will not be present, and professional and instructional support staff

must participate in training and development opportunities, under the conditions and guidelines described here.

The scheduled professional development days are mandatory for all professional and instructional support staff to attend. During these days, all staff will participate in training in topics or areas that have been identified either in our annual district improvement plan or related to achieving campus performance objectives. The approved district calendar identifies the mandatory professional development days.

Employees should not plan to attend college classes during the school work day. All college course work should be planned for times when school is not in session or when an employee is not scheduled to work.

## **Evaluations/Appraisals**

### *Policy DN Series*

All employees will be evaluated or appraised in writing by their supervisors. Teachers will ordinarily be appraised annually, but may be appraised less frequently if they agree in writing and the most recent appraisal showed no areas of deficiency. However, everyone will be evaluated at least once every three years. You will have an opportunity for a conference with your supervisor to discuss your evaluation and expectations for performance. An important part of your supervisor's job is overseeing and assessing employee performance throughout the school year, and your supervisor may provide written documentation to you relating to your performance as he or she determines appropriate.

Teachers in grades K-12 are appraised using the state Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) and will receive orientation to the system prior to being evaluated.

## **Transfers/Reassignments**

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the superintendent or designee when the superintendent or designee determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the district. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the district process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and district policy DGBA.

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department for the following school year by submitting a "Transfer" request no later than June 1st. A Transfer may be found in the online application system and is essentially a condensed application. You must obtain approval from your current principal or supervisor prior to the request. Questions regarding completing a Transfer or the process may be directed to the HR Department. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. The principal of the receiving campus has the authority to approve or reject all staff assigned to his or her campus except when reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes.

All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Human Resources Department and are subject to approval by the superintendent. The superintendent has the authority under state law and district policy to transfer or reassign any employee in the district.

Vacancies are posted on the district's website. All current district employees are eligible to apply for other jobs in the district, but we will not consider an applicant for any position who does not meet the minimum requirements posted for the position. A Transfer Application, not a new application, is required for current employees to apply. If a current employee is selected for an interview, the employee will be notified and an interview time scheduled.

## **Safety**

*Policy CK series*

We strive to maintain a safe and healthy work environment. All employees share the responsibility for helping to keep the workplace safe and to avoid injury to themselves or others. We will provide training from time-to-time for all employees on how to avoid accidents in the workplace. Violating safety standards pertinent to your assignment can result in disciplinary action. Employees must keep work areas clean and orderly at all times, as well as operate only equipment for which they have training and authorization. We remind you that you must report a job-related injury immediately to your supervisor so that the district can complete required reports under the workers' compensation statutes and rules.

Employees are responsible to maintain a secure, clean, healthy, and orderly workplace. Classrooms, shops, district vehicles, etc., are in view of the public and students so employees should be conscious of the need to maintain good housekeeping. Following security protocol and maintaining an orderly workplace sets a good example for students, provides a safer environment, and demonstrates the District's awareness of the need to preserve public property.

If District keys have been entrusted to you and they are lost or stolen, report the incident immediately to your supervisor. A replacement key request must be initiated with your supervisor which is then submitted to the Maintenance Department. You will be required to sign for receipt of keys / fobs and are responsible for the return upon leaving the district or at any time if requested to do so. A minimum charge of \$25 per key / fob will be incurred for those lost or not returned upon request.

We comply with the state Hazard Communication Act and maintain current lists of hazardous chemicals used in the district and current Material Safety Data Sheets. If you want or need this information, please contact the Director of Maintenance.

## **Important Notice:**

Never underestimate the seemingly idle threats of students, parents, or other individuals. We need to encourage students to report any and all threats of violence to the appropriate school personnel. It is everyone's responsibility to help ensure the safety of our students and one another.

## **Health Safety Training**

### *Policies DBA and DMA*

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the District proof of current certification or training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association University Interscholastic League, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to the Director of Student Services by the first day of school.

## **Pest Control**

Periodically, district buildings and grounds are treated by licensed or trained individuals to control unwanted pests, such as insects and rodents. We will post notices of those treatment dates as required by law and will schedule treatment times when students or employees are least likely to be in the building or on the grounds.

Employees are prohibited from applying any pesticide or herbicide without appropriate training and prior approval of the integrated pest management (IPM) coordinator. Use of unauthorized pest control chemicals in a classroom or office space violates state and federal laws. If required, employees shall notify their principal or supervisor of the need for such services and not apply such chemical agents. If you have questions, you may contact the district IPM coordinator at (903) 434-8666.

## **Asbestos Management Plan**

The District's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations addressing asbestos that may have been used in District facilities, is available in the Maintenance Director's office during that department's business hours, Monday through Friday. If you have any questions, please contact Russell Luck, the District's asbestos designated person, at (903) 434-8666.

## **Maintenance and Repairs**

We strive to keep all our facilities clean, well-maintained, and in good repair. Teachers and other employees must ensure that they do not store items in their

classrooms or offices that will attract pests of any kind. If your classroom or office needs maintenance or a repair, complete a Maintenance Request Form and submit it to your principal or supervisor. If you believe that your work area or classroom is not being adequately cleaned, contact your principal or supervisor. Do not take it on yourself to direct the work schedule or activities of our custodial and maintenance staff.

## **Standards of Conduct**

*Policy DH*

We expect all district employees to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the District and treat each other, students, and parents or other patrons of the district with common courtesy and respect at all times. We hold our students to a high standard of conduct, as expressed in the Student Code of Conduct, and we expect no less of our employees. All district employees serve as role models for our students and must conduct themselves at work and in public as honest, law-abiding citizens.

Employees must:

- Recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action.
- Know and comply with department and District policies and procedures.
- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use District time, funds, and property for authorized District business and activities only.
- Be of good moral character and worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.
- Not falsify records or direct others to do so
- Not make threats of violence against other employees, board members, students, or parents of students

The Educators' Code of Ethics may be found on the Texas Education Website: <https://tea.texas.gov/>. By law, it applies to all district employees who hold a certificate issued by the State Board of Educator Certification. **By local policy, it applies to all employees in the district.** You should read and be familiar with the standards and expectations expressed there because these are the standards and expectations we will impose on you. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines, including intentionally making a false claim, offering

false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a district investigation may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

If you are arrested for or convicted of a felony or any crime of moral turpitude, you must report that fact to your principal or immediate supervisor within 3 calendar days. Offenses involving moral turpitude include without limitation theft or attempted theft of any kind, fraud of any kind, sexual offenses, any assaultive or violent offense, bribery, perjury, drug or alcohol offenses, offenses constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code, or any other offense contrary to justice, honesty, modesty, or good morals. Discharge of Convicted Employees Policy DF The district shall discharge any employee who has been convicted of a felony under Title 5 Penal Code.

## **Fraud and Financial Impropriety**

### *Policy CAA*

All employees should act with integrity and diligence in duties involving the District's financial resources. The District prohibits fraud and financial impropriety, as defined below. Fraud and financial impropriety includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the District
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other District assets, including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of District financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of District information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the District
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the District
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the District

## **Discrimination/Harassment/Inappropriate Conduct**

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees, unpaid interns, student teachers, students, parents, patrons, or vendors to the school. No district employee is permitted to have a sexual or romantic relationship with a student, regardless whether the student or parent welcomes or approves of the relationship.

We do not allow employees to harass each other based on race, color, gender, national origin or ethnicity, religion, age, or disability.

Harassment on these bases includes physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when it is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with someone's work performance; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive work environment; or otherwise adversely affects someone's employment opportunities.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of any kind that is based on a person's sex or that would not occur but for the sex or gender of the person and that is so severe or pervasive that it deprives a person of the benefit of his or her job or education. Isolated incidents of inappropriate sexually charged conduct may not amount to sexual harassment, but they are still prohibited under our standards of conduct and should be immediately reported to an administrator.

We provide mandatory training periodically for all employees on how to recognize, prevent, and avoid sexual harassment.

Individuals who believe they have experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, been discriminated or retaliated against or harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal, supervisor, Title IX Coordinator or Superintendent. The district's Title IX coordinator's name and contact information is listed in the Equal Employment Opportunity section of this handbook.

Our complete policy on harassment and the process for bringing a complaint may be found in *Policies DIA (LEGAL), DIA (LOCAL)*.

## **Inappropriate Social Relationships with Students**

School employees are always in the public eye, and the expectation is that they will always observe professional boundaries in their personal relationships with students. District policy also prohibits employees from having "inappropriate social relationships" with students.

So there is no confusion or misunderstanding about the District's standards on this issue, the following interactions or communications with students will generally be considered an "inappropriate social relationship":

- Communications with students, whether by telephone, email, instant message, X, text message, or any other form of electronic or digital communication at any time, unless the communication is directly related to

your assigned duties and responsibilities, e.g., the student's homework, class or team activity, school club, or other school-sponsored activity and has been approved by your supervisor.

- Engaging in personal conversations with students about either the student's or your own personal relationships or problems with spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, or significant other
- Taking a student away from school during the school day without obtaining express permission of the student's parent or the principal
- Visiting students at their homes when a parent is not present or inviting a student to your home without prior express permission of the student's parent
- Giving gifts of a personal nature (clothing, perfume or cologne, jewelry, etc.) to students at school or at any time without the parent's knowledge and permission
- Playing "favorites", e.g., allowing specific students to get away with conduct that is not permitted from other students

### **Tobacco Use**

*Policies DH, GKA, FNCD*

We do not allow any use of any tobacco product on school property, indoors or outdoors, at any time by any person. This prohibition includes any tobacco use in a school-owned vehicle. Because you are a role model for students, we also prohibit you from using any tobacco product in the presence of students when you are serving in any school-related capacity. If you are a tobacco user, you must leave school property—with the permission of your supervisor—in order to smoke or otherwise use a tobacco product.

### **Electronic or Vapor "Cigarettes"**

The District recognizes that electronic or vapor cigarettes are not "tobacco"; nonetheless, we believe the use of those devices in the presence of students or while otherwise on school property or at school events may encourage students to experiment with tobacco cigarettes or other nicotine delivery devices. Thus, employees will not use electronic or vapor "cigarettes" in school buildings or the presence of students. Employees may use these devices in their own cars on school property, however, during times when they are not otherwise required to be on duty.

## **Alcohol and Drug Use**

*Policies DH, DI*

You are prohibited from using or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug or controlled substance at work or at any school-sponsored activity, whether you have an official role in that activity or not. If we have any reason to believe that you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs at school or while engaged in any school activity, we may transport you to a medical facility and require you to be tested, at our expense, to determine blood alcohol level or other relevant information.

We conduct pre-employment and random testing for drug and alcohol use for all employees in safety sensitive positions. If you are required to have a commercial driver's license or drive a school-owned vehicle as any part of your assigned duties and responsibilities, you will be subject to drug and alcohol testing. We are required to make a report to Texas Department of Public Safety if you test positive for alcohol or drugs, refuse to provide a specimen for testing, or provide an adulterated or diluted, or substitute specimen for testing. If you have questions about the details of the drug testing program for employees, talk to your supervisor and also see policy *DHE (LEGAL) and (LOCAL)*.

You cannot provide alcohol or illegal or prohibited drugs to students and must not allow students to use alcohol or illegal drugs in your presence, at any time or place. You are also prohibited from providing any type of over-the-counter medication or dietary supplement to students. Only designated school employees may administer prescription medications or over-the-counter medications to students, in accordance with Board policy.

## **Weapons**

You cannot bring any firearm or any other prohibited weapon on school property unless you have written permission from the superintendent or board of trustees. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the District's weapons policy should report it to their supervisor or call the Mount Pleasant ISD Police Department immediately. A list of prohibited weapons and their definitions is in the Code of Student Conduct and in board policy at FNGC (LEGAL).

## **Appropriate Language**

As a role model for students in the school setting, all employees are expected to refrain from using profanity or vulgar language, both in the presence of students and to each other.

## **Dress and Grooming Standards**

You must maintain a clean, neat, modest, professional appearance at school and school activities. All employees must display school identification at all times on school property or at school-sponsored activities.

Departments/Programs within the District, food service, and maintenance/custodial employees may be required to comply with specific dress and grooming standards for health and safety reasons. Your supervisor will provide more detailed information about these requirements and any specific to your campus or area.

The District has a right at any time to require staff to wear a mask.

### **Searches**

Noninvestigatory searches in the workplace, including accessing an employee's desk, file cabinets, or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes may occur when an employee is unavailable. Therefore, employees are hereby notified that they have no legitimate expectation of privacy in those places. In addition, the district reserves the right to conduct searches when there is reasonable cause to believe a search will uncover evidence of work-related misconduct. Such an investigatory search may include drug and alcohol testing if the suspected violation relates to drug or alcohol use. The district may search the employee, the employee's personal items, and work areas including district-owned technology resources, lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or work sites or used in district business.

### **Outside Employment and Tutoring**

#### *Policy DBD*

You are free to have employment outside the district so long as those duties do not interfere with your performance of duties for the district and are not inconsistent with your position in the district. However, if you are using family medical leave, temporary disability leave, or any other type of leave under our policies, you may not work at any other employment during that leave. Teachers may not tutor their own students for pay during the school year.

### **Work-Related Travel**

Any travel on our behalf must be approved by the principal and superintendent in advance. We have an approved per diem rate for meals when traveling on school business. You will not be reimbursed for any amounts in excess of the approved per diem amount. No employee may receive both a per diem allotment and reimbursement for actual meal expenses. We will not reimburse you for alcohol and will not pay for personal charges on hotel/motel rooms such as in-room movies. All travel expenses will be reconciled with the Business Office no later than 30 calendar days after travel is completed.

If you use your own car for approved work-related travel, we will pay you for mileage at the current approved rate, but will not reimburse you for gasoline, which is included in the mileage rate.

## **Use of District Vehicles**

Employees whose duties permit them to drive a District-owned vehicle are charged with operating that vehicle for MPISD business only. Some employees have emergency call-out responsibilities and may drive their assigned vehicle to their residence. School-owned vehicles checked out to staff must not be driven for personal use during non-working hours.

## **Personal Use of Electronic Communications**

### *Policy DBD*

Electronic communications includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), web logs (blogs), wikis, electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram). Electronic communications also include all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.

As role models for the District's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as District employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic media as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic media interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for the web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

An employee who uses electronic media for personal purposes shall observe the following:

- The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to before and after scheduled work hours, meal times, and approved breaks, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct District business.
- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the District's computers, network, or equipment.
- The employee shall not use the District's logo or other copyrighted material of the District without express, written consent.

- An employee may not share or post, in any format, information, videos, or pictures obtained while on duty or on District business unless the employee first obtains written approval from the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees should be cognizant that they have access to information and images that, if transmitted to the public, could violate privacy concerns.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:
  - Confidentiality of student records
  - Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law
  - Confidentiality of District records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses
  - Copyright law
  - Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system

Additional information regarding employee use of electronic communication, including electronic communications between employees and students, may be found in the Appendix of this handbook and District Policies.

### **Animals in District Buildings**

Other than laboratory animals used in Science, Agriculture, or similar classes, no employee or student should bring any animal into school buildings. Many students and employees are allergic to animal hair and dander. If it is necessary for an animal to be present in a District building, the building supervisor must be contacted prior to bringing the animal into the building. Supervisors must give approval prior to the animal coming into the building. Animals allowed in buildings must have appropriate vaccinations. Service animals of employees, students, law enforcement agencies, and handicapped visitors are welcome.

### **Rumor Control**

Spreading rumors in the workplace is inappropriate as rumors may diminish employee morale or can be the basis of misinformation. School employees handle a great deal of information about students, parents, and fellow workers. As public employees, school workers should understand that they hold a public trust by knowing sensitive information and that they must not spread this information in the form of rumors.

## **Purchases**

All purchases with school funds, or for which you will seek reimbursement from school funds, must be approved in advance with an authorized purchase order. We will not pay for or reimburse for any purchases that do not comply with our required procedures. You will be personally responsible for any purchases that do not comply with our required procedures. **No school employee other than the superintendent and others specifically designated by the board of trustees can sign a contract that binds the district.** All contracts for purchases of goods or services, including vending contracts, yearbook publication contracts, graduation supply contracts, and so on must be submitted to the business office for review and approval **before they are signed**. If you sign a contract other than in accordance with these requirements, we will not be responsible for any amounts to be paid under that contract and you may be personally responsible. A Purchasing Procedures Manual is available at each campus office and the administration building.

## **Meal Charges By Employees**

Employees may be permitted to charge a limited amount of meal costs in campus food service facilities. Employees are responsible to pay charges each monthly payday. Meal charges shall not exceed \$20.00 for any employee. If an employee should be terminated or resign, all meal charges shall be deducted from the last pay check. Principals and supervisors will ascertain if an exiting employee has meal charges pending prior to the exit interview.

## **Misuse of Compensated Time**

*Policy DH*

All employees are assigned specific as well as general job duties and responsibilities as defined in a job description that is published by the District. All employees are expected to discharge those assigned duties and comply with general responsibilities as well. Employees must be engaged with assigned duties and responsibilities at all times, exclusive of authorized breaks.

No employee should conduct personal business while at work unless it is an emergency and the applicable supervisor informed. Employees shall not sleep on the job, misuse District equipment for personal use, or otherwise engage in activities that are not related to the best interest of students or the Mount Pleasant ISD. Employees who misuse compensated time may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

## **Complaints and Grievances**

*Policy DGBA*

We encourage you to attempt an informal resolution of any complaints or concerns you have about the workplace by talking to your principal or supervisor. However, you have the right to bring a written complaint about wages, hours, or conditions

of work or if you believe that you have been harmed in some way by the violation of a law or policy. Complaints must be filed within 15 business days of the event you are complaining about. We will not entertain untimely complaints. Our policy generally provides for a three-step process, beginning with the principal or immediate supervisor and ending with the board of trustees.

At-will employees may complain about the termination of their employment through this process, and probationary teachers whose employment is terminated at the end of a school year in the best interest of the district may also use this process to present a concern about that decision to the board of trustees. All other employees must use the specific processes described in law and policy to raise issues related to contract nonrenewal or termination.

The full text of our DGBA (LEGAL) and (LOCAL) policies regarding complaints and grievances may be found on our website.

## **Resignation from Employment**

*Policies DFE, DC*

Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation must be submitted to the campus principal **and** the Deputy Superintendent of Human Resources. The resignation will be given to the Superintendent for approval. The superintendent is the only person with authority to accept resignations from contract employees.

Resignations submitted by a contract employee to be effective at the end of the school year are final when they are submitted and cannot be withdrawn. It is not necessary for the Superintendent or any other person or body to take action to accept a resignation effective at the end of a school year.

The Superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any acts requiring notification to the State Board for Educator Certification.

Noncontract employees may resign their position at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the immediate supervisor at least two weeks prior to the effective date. The supervisor will forward the information to the Human Resources Department. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so. **You must schedule an exit interview with the Human Resources Department if you leave district employment for any reason.**

## **Termination of Employment**

*Policies DCD and DF series*

Please refer to our policies regarding termination or nonrenewal for the processes involved in ending employment in the district. Generally, at-will employees can be dismissed from employment at any time for any reason or no reason, provided it is not an illegal reason.

You must schedule an exit interview with the Human Resources Department if you leave district employment for any reason. We will delay the delivery of the last paycheck until all district equipment, keys, or any other district-owned property or materials have been returned and accounted for and exit interview is complete.

### **Teacher Retirement**

TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the Human Resources and Benefits offices as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available on the TRS website ([www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us)), or by calling 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400.

Detailed information about employment after retirement is available in the TRS publication *Employment after Retirement*.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT WORKING WITH STUDENTS IN MOUNT PLEASANT ISD**

Much of the information in this section of the Handbook applies primarily to teachers and other professional employees working directly with students on a daily basis. Some of the information, however, applies to all employees. We will use the term “employees” when we mean everyone and “teachers” when we mean professionals. We will also continue to use “you” and “your” as appropriate.

### **Student Records and Confidentiality**

#### *Policy FL*

Education records and information maintained about students that is related to their education are confidential under federal law. You will often learn personal information about your students and their families in the course of your work for the district. You must not discuss students or their families—their conduct, their academic achievement or academic failings, or personal information—with anyone unless you need to share the information with another employee or someone working with the school district for a reason related to the child’s education. Board

policy at FL contains complete information related to the confidentiality of student records.

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus principal for assistance.

## **Discipline/Student Supervision and Control**

*Policies FN series and FO series*

The board-approved Student Code of Conduct contains all the rules and requirements for conduct and discipline. Each employee has the responsibility to be mindful of student conduct at all times and to intervene if students are harming each other or school property. In other situations, if you observe student misconduct, promptly inform the principal or assistant principal. In most circumstances, only professional employees will actually impose or administer disciplinary consequences. Employees can use reasonable restraint of students to prevent injury to the student or other students or employees, or to prevent property damage. However, students with disabilities can be restrained only in emergency situations.

Classroom teachers have the authority and responsibility to develop and communicate rules for classroom behavior. We expect you to handle minor disturbances in the classroom through these rules. However, if a student engages in classroom conduct that violates the Code of Conduct, complete a discipline referral form and send the student to the office.

Any employee who observes students acting in any way that could be construed as harassment or bullying under the code of conduct must promptly report the conduct to the principal or assistant principal and should intervene to correct or stop the conduct when possible. If you reasonably believe the conduct is sexual abuse or other maltreatment of a child, then you must also make the required report to Child Protective Services or local law enforcement.

Classroom teachers should not leave students unattended at any time and must not leave them unattended for more than a minute or two in an emergency. This rule is particularly important at the elementary grades, but also applies at the secondary grades. If you must leave your classroom during instruction because of an emergency, inform the office so that we can make arrangements to have an adult present in the classroom while you are gone.

## **Emergency Procedures**

*Policy CKC*

We have developed a district-wide plan for use in case of dangerous weather or other emergency or crisis situations. This plan is posted at each campus in the principal's office. You must be familiar with these procedures and follow them. Each campus is equipped with an automatic external defibrillator. Fire extinguishers are located throughout all District buildings. Employees should

know the location of these devices and procedures for their use. Your calm demeanor and confidence in dealing with an emergency or crisis situation at school will help your students remain calm so that they can respond as needed. We will conduct emergency procedure exercises periodically—some announced to staff, some unannounced.

In situations where weather conditions may interfere with the school schedule, you will be notified through School Messenger, your supervisor, or check the district's website. The superintendent will make all decisions regarding the necessity for an early release, delayed start time, or school closure because of the weather.

### **Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect**

#### *Policies DG, FFG, GRA*

Texas law requires all employees who have reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused or neglected to report it within 24 hours to law enforcement, the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), or an appropriate state agency. This duty cannot be delegated, and employees must also report if they believe an adult was abused as a child and disclosure is necessary to protect others. Reports can be made at <https://www.txabusehotline.org> or 800-252-5400, and employees are protected from retaliation and liability when reporting in good faith, but must not interfere with investigations.

We provide annual training to all staff on recognizing the signs of sexual abuse or other maltreatment of a child, which includes child abuse and neglect, as those terms are defined in the Texas Family Code. All employees have a legal duty to make a report to local law enforcement or to Department of Family and Protective Services if they have reason to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected. A report that a parent or other person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of a child may have abused or neglected the child must be reported to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS).

Professionals and paraprofessionals who hold an aide certificate have a legal duty to make this report orally within 24 hours and to follow that with a written report. You have not fulfilled this duty if you simply make a report to your supervisor. While we want you to inform the principal if you believe a report is required, you must still make the report yourself. If you are not certain whether you have observed child abuse or neglect, you should err on the side of reporting. Professionals can receive sanctions against their certificates and any person can face criminal charges for knowingly failing to make a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect. Your identity will be protected when you make a good faith report.

Child Abuse Reporting Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or [www.txabusehotline.org](https://www.txabusehotline.org)

If it is a life threatening or emergency situation, call 911 immediately.

Titus County Sheriff: 903-572-6641

Mt. Pleasant City Police: 903-575-4004

## **Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children**

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children. As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused or otherwise maltreated. Abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined to include any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare, including conduct that constitutes the offense of continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual, indecency with a child, improper relationship between an educator and a student, sexual assault, or encouraging a child to engage in sexual conduct, as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect following the procedures described above in Reporting Suspected Child Abuse.

## **Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation /Bullying**

The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. Reports of discrimination, harassment, retaliation or bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. The student policies related to Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation and Bullying may be found in policies FFH (LEGAL) and (LOCAL) and FFI (LEGAL) and (LOCAL).

## **School Activities and Functions**

During "Back-to-School" nights at the beginning of the school year, all teachers are required to be present unless you have made advance arrangements with the principal or are too sick to attend. This event is an opportunity to meet parents, explain briefly how you operate your classroom, and give parents an opportunity to ask questions and tell you things they think you need to know about their children.

We will let you know when you are expected to attend other events or activities.

## **Parent Organizations**

We encourage teachers to be familiar with and take part in, as they choose, the activities of the parent group at their campus.

## **Parent Relations**

All written and oral communications from teachers or other staff to parents must be professional and courteous and always made with the child's best interest at heart. Teachers and other professionals should always respond as promptly as reasonable under the circumstances to parent communications to them, either in writing or by telephone.

We provide a conference period so that you can schedule meetings with parents at their request or at yours. If you schedule a meeting with a parent, you must inform the principal's office so that we will know to expect the parent to check in. We generally encourage parents to visit their children's classroom occasionally, but parents must make prior arrangements with you and you need to let us know in advance. Parents or other visitors must always check in at the principal's office and receive a Visitor's Pass. Do not allow parents to come directly to your room to pick up a child unless you have received prior specific authorization from the principal.

If for some reason a problem in communication develops between you and a parent, your principal or another administrator will be glad to be present at your conferences with the parent, at your request.

Only materials that have been approved by the principal can be sent home with students in their backpacks or otherwise. Do not rely on students to deliver important communications from you to their parents, such as progress reports, report cards, requests for a conference, or concerns about the child's conduct or performance.

## **Counseling Program**

We have a comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling program and encourage you to refer students as you see a need. We generally expect you to be sensitive to students and supportive of them and their personal issues without becoming overly involved in their personal lives. Most classroom teachers are not trained counselors. While we want you to be a receptive ear to students, we also expect you to know your own limits and to refer immediately students who come to you with concerns about drug or alcohol use of their own or in their family, who come to you with concerns about pregnancy or sexual matters, or who express a desire to injure themselves or others.

## **Special Education/Section 504 Program**

Classroom teachers and other professionals can refer students, based on the teacher's academic or behavioral observations or concerns, for assessment to determine if they have a disability that makes them eligible for special education or related services. However, you cannot suggest any particular diagnosis to parents or recommend to them that a child use any psychotropic drug. We will

provide training opportunities for classroom teachers and other professionals in knowing when to refer students and in working with students with disabilities in the regular classroom.

If you are a teacher for a student with disabilities, you may be required to attend Admission, Review, and Dismissal committee meetings and participate in reviewing or planning the child's Individualized Educational Program. These meetings may occur during your conference period because they are meetings to plan for a student's instruction, and you must attend if scheduled.

Even if you are not a member of the ARD committee, you must follow the IEP for any student with disabilities in your classroom and make sure that you are making any and all the modifications to instruction or the instructional setting that are called for in the IEP. Noninstructional staff must also comply with any administrative directives for handling or working with students with disabilities.

### **Student Attendance Accounting**

We rely on accurate student attendance accounting for state funding and for determining one of the school's ratings under the Student Achievement Indicator System. You must complete daily attendance records for each class.

Accurate record keeping is also necessary because of the attendance for credit law, which generally requires that students be present for 90% of the days class is taught in order to get credit for the class. The campus attendance committee ultimately determines whether credit will be granted for a student with excessive absences. You may be called on to serve as a member of the attendance committee.

### **Curriculum/Instruction**

Teachers must teach the curriculum approved by the board of trustees, which is focused on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills adopted by the State Board of Education. The TEKS are aligned with the statewide assessment program for all students, which is administered annually at some grade levels. As you are all aware, campus and district ratings rely to a great extent on student achievement as demonstrated through success on the state assessments. For all these reasons, each teacher must devote his or her best energy and efforts to delivering the required knowledge and skills to their students and making sure that students are learning.

Teachers do not have the latitude to select their own instructional materials. You must use the district-provided textbooks or other instructional materials and curriculum and must obtain prior approval from your principal to use any other materials in your classroom.

Refer to board policies EFA (LEGAL), (LOCAL), and (EXHIBIT) regarding federal copyright limitations on the use of copied materials in the classroom and intellectual properties. Any copying you do for your classes must conform to the fair use guidelines in the EFA (EXHIBIT).

We encourage teachers to be creative in how they impart the essential skills and knowledge but you must obtain prior approval from your principal to conduct any special activity in the classroom that is not covered in the curriculum guide for your subject or grade level.

### **Field Trips**

If you or your grade level or team want to take students on a field trip, you must first get principal approval for the activity and the scheduled date, as well as submit a request for necessary transportation. A proposal for a field trip must be coordinated with the TEKS for the course, define the curricular objectives for the trip, and fit in with the current instructional unit.

Field trips will always be taken on school transportation and never by private passenger vehicles. Students must submit signed parent permission slips before the trip.

If you will have certain criteria for students to participate in the field trip, you must communicate those well in advance to students and parents. Any criteria should be designed to maximize student participation. Criteria for participation must not be designed in such a way that all students who are ineligible can be readily identified as students who are failing the class. You must plan an alternate instructional activity for students who are not eligible to participate in the field trip.

### **Using Film/Movies in Class**

Movies can be used effectively for instruction in many courses, but must never be used in the classroom as a reward or for entertainment.

Before you show a movie to a class, however, you must discuss the activity with your principal, including how the movie is related to the TEKS for the class or subject. Movies should always be age-appropriate for the students in the class.

### **Textbooks/Instructional Technology**

At the beginning the school year or semester, you will assist in the distribution of state-adopted textbooks or instructional technology to students in your classes. At the end of the year or semester, you are responsible for accounting for the return of textbooks or instructional technology issued to your students. However, we will not require you to pay for any textbooks or instructional technology that your students steal, misplace, or do not return.

Some students will not be issued textbooks if they did not properly return books issued in the previous year. You will have a few classroom copies of the textbook or other instructional materials for those students to use in class, but they cannot take the books home or to their lockers.

## **Fund-Raising**

You cannot use instructional time to administer or facilitate fund-raising efforts of student or other organizations.

If you are the sponsor of a student group or organization that wishes to conduct a fund-raising campaign, you must get prior approval from the principal for the activity.

As a sponsor of a student group or organization, you are personally responsible for accounting for all funds raised or collected by students in your group. You must refer to the MPISD Student/Campus Activity Fund Procedures Manual for all information concerning your responsibilities.

Your failure to follow established procedures related to depositing, handling, and accounting for the proceeds from fund-raising activities or any other monies associated with student activities or organizations may affect your employment.

## **Extracurricular /UIL Sponsorships**

Your principal can assign extra duties related to sponsorship of extracurricular student groups and UIL academic activities. Some of these assignments may have additional stipends according to the schedule approved by the board of trustees; some may not. A teacher's primary responsibility is **always** the delivery of the required curriculum to students in your classes.

## APPENDIX

Electronic Media / Communication and Internet Use Agreement

Educators' Code of Ethics (*This is for our Employees' convenience. The most current online version should always be consulted if there are questions.*)

Helpful Contacts

# Texas Administrative Code

[Next Rule>>](#)

[TITLE 19](#)

EDUCATION

[PART 7](#)

STATE BOARD FOR EDUCATOR  
CERTIFICATION

[CHAPTER 247](#)

EDUCATORS' CODE OF ETHICS

**RULE §247.2**

**Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas  
Educators**

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## Enforceable Standards

### 1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

**Standard 1.1** The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, educator preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and its certification process.

**Standard 1.2** The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

**Standard 1.3** The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

**Standard 1.4** The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

**Standard 1.5** The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or that are used to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

**Standard 1.6** The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

**Standard 1.7** The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal laws.

**Standard 1.8** The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.

**Standard 1.9** The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, school board members, students, or parents of students.

**Standard 1.10** The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.

**Standard 1.11** The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.

**Standard 1.12** The educator shall refrain from the illegal use, abuse, or distribution of controlled substances, prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.

**Standard 1.13** The educator shall not be under the influence of alcohol or consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

## **2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues**

**Standard 2.1** The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

**Standard 2.2** The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

**Standard 2.3** The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.

**Standard 2.4** The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.

**Standard 2.5** The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.

**Standard 2.6** The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.

**Standard 2.7** The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

**Standard 2.8** The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly subject a colleague to sexual harassment.

## **3. Ethical Conduct toward Students**

**Standard 3.1** The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

**Standard 3.2** The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.

**Standard 3.3** The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

**Standard 3.4** The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.

**Standard 3.5** The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.

**Standard 3.6** The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.

**Standard 3.7** The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

**Standard 3.8** The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.

**Standard 3.9** The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

- (i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
- (ii) the subject matter of the communication;
- (iii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
- (iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
- (v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
- (vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

## Electronic Media / Communication and Use

## Use Agreement – Personal and Student Use of Electronic Media

### Mount Pleasant Independent School District Responsible Use of the District's Electronic Communications System

The Mount Pleasant Independent School District offers access to electronic equipment, the Internet, and a District-based World Wide Web server to MPISD faculty, staff, and students for the purpose of pursuing educational goals. Access to these resources is considered a privilege, and District policies, regulations, and procedures have been developed to address the issues and concerns raised by access to electronic information. In addition to the general policies, regulations, and procedures that must be adhered to by all District personnel and students accessing the network systems, faculty and staff will have a number of additional responsibilities for maintaining adherence to policies regarding use of the Internet. Such responsibilities are in keeping with the standards and practices outlined in the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

**The District has the authority to and will monitor network usage, including electronic messages sent and received to ensure compliance with the policy.** Employees are responsible for any transactions that occur under the assigned user ID or account and any violation of the district's policy will be considered misconduct and a violation of the employee standards of conduct.

Teachers will be responsible for monitoring students in the use of the Internet, and for distributing and collecting the student's signed consent forms. Teachers are also responsible for keeping a copy of these forms on file and forwarding the original to the campus office or campus designee. Teachers will be professionally responsible for closely monitoring student conduct on the Internet during class sessions and extended activities. Teachers may ask a student to print a history of sites that have been accessed during any specific Internet session to verify the educational relevance of the site. Resources should be restricted to specific class usage for assignments, research, etc... Teachers are responsible for regulating access to the Internet and other network resources. Teachers must also report any violations of Internet use and network access directly to the campus principal who may inform the Technology Director. Furthermore, teachers will be responsible with following through on suspected violations of technology policies and procedures by individuals, whether during the class or not. The campus principal will enforce disciplinary actions. Violators can lose all computing access.

Students may be allowed to assist in the development of web pages. However, teachers must preview and approve proposed content and linkages of those pages. Not all web pages designed by and for students will be posted. Personal information of any kind is strictly prohibited without the proper written consent. Pictures that allow an individual to be identified by name are prohibited, unless parental consent is on file.

Home pages will be posted to the District's web server only after further review by

a designee of the campus principal and/or the designated webmaster. Only the Technology Director, Webmaster or his/her designee will be allowed to upload files to the District web server **after** the review process.

Student access to the Internet may be denied by parental action, thus the teacher cannot consider student use mandatory. Students who do not have access to the Internet must be provided with alternative means for completing assignments.

Faculty and staff will intervene if there is any suspected violation of policies on use of copyrighted materials. **Teachers who assign or even suggest Internet use for class assignments must teach and monitor proper copyrighting and appropriate referencing of materials.**

Teachers and District staff must recognize that computer files and E-mail have the same legal status as other district communications and files that are subject to public access. Teachers and District staff should also recognize that illegal activities and activities that are contrary to state or federal law can result in disciplinary action or charges being brought against District personnel who are found to engage in or permit such activities using District computers and network resources. Relevant statutes are *Section 16.04 Unlawful Access to Stored Communications* and *Section 33.02*

## **Personal Use of Electronic Media**

### *Policy DH*

Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing Web sites (e.g., You Tube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.

As role models for the District's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as District employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic media as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic media interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for Web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

An employee who uses electronic media for personal purposes shall observe the following:

- The employee shall limit the use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to before and after scheduled work hours, meal times, and approved breaks, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct District business.
- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the District's computers, networks, or equipment.
- The employee shall not use the District's logo or other copyrighted material of the District without express, written consent.
- An employee may not share or post, in any format, information, videos, or pictures obtained while on duty or on District business unless the employee first obtains written approval from the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees should be cognizant that they have access to information and images that, if transmitted to the public, could violate privacy concerns.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:

## **Confidentiality**

- Confidentiality of student records (Policy FL)
- Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law (Policy DH)
- Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses (Policy GBA)
- Copyright law (Policy EFE)
- Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system (Policy DH)

See *Use of Electronic Media with Students*, below, for regulations on employee communication with students through electronic media.

## **Use of Electronic Media with Students**

### *Policy DH*

A certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated in writing by the superintendent or a campus principal, may communicate through electronic media with students who are currently enrolled in the District. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. All other employees are prohibited from communicating with students who are enrolled in the District through electronic media.

An employee is not subject to these provisions to the extent the employee has a social or family relationship with a student.

The following definitions apply for the use of electronic media with students:

- *Electronic media* includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing Web sites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, SnapChat, X, LinkedIn). *Electronic media* also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications
- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or a blog) is not a *communication*; however, the employee may be subject to District regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.
- *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

An employee who uses electronic media to communicate with students shall observe the following:

- The employee will not use text messaging as a form of communication with students. Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility.
- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g., matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, including

Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records (See Policies CPC and FL)

**Copyright law (Policy EFE)**

- Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. (Policy DF)
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network sites(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more currently-enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through any form of one-to-one communication.

An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to the superintendent or superintendent's designee.

## **Breach of Computer Security**

Users, including faculty, staff, students, and community members may not use the District's electronic resources to access, acquire, and/or bring through the District's network, obscene, offensive, or objectionable material including forwarding jokes or pictures that others might find offensive. Access to Internet sites can and will be monitored and tracked by system administrator.

Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If an employee feels that they can identify a security problem on the network, employees are required to notify a system administrator or school personnel. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic mail messages is prohibited. Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users, deliberate interference with the ability of other system users to send/receive electronic mail, or the use of another person's user ID and/or password is prohibited.

## **Individual User Responsibilities**

The following standards will apply to all users of the District's electronic information; communications systems:

- The individual in whose name a system account is issued will be responsible at all times for its proper use
- The system may not be used for illegal purposes, in support of illegal

activities, or for any other activity prohibited by District policy or guidelines

- System users may not disable, or attempt to disable, a filtering device on the District's electronic communication system
- Communications may not be encrypted so as to avoid security review by system administrators
- Students may not distribute personal information about themselves or others by means of the electronic communications system; this includes, but is not limited to, personal addresses and telephone numbers
- Students should never make appointments to meet people whom they meet on-line and should report to a teacher or administrator if they receive any request for such a meeting
- System users must purge electronic mail in accordance with established retention guidelines
- System users may not redistribute copyrighted programs or data except with the written permission of the copyright holder or designee. Such permission must be specified in the document or must be obtained directly from the copyright holder or designee in accordance with applicable copyright law, District policy, and administrative regulations
- System users should avoid actions that are likely to increase the risk of introducing viruses to the system, such as opening e-mail messages from unknown senders and loading data from unprotected computers
- System users may upload public domain programs to the system. System users may also download public domain programs for their own use or may non-commercially redistribute a public domain program. System users are responsible for determining whether a program is in the public domain
- System users may not send or post messages that are abusive, obscene, pornographic, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal
- System users may not purposefully access materials that are abusive, obscene, pornographic, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.
- System users should be mindful that use of school-related electronic mail addresses might cause some recipients or other readers of that mail to assume they represent the District or school, whether or not that was the user's intention
- System users may not waste District resources related to the electronic communications system
- System users may not gain unauthorized access to resources or information.

## Helpful contacts

If you have questions or concerns that cannot be answered by your supervisor, you may contact the appropriate department. All phone numbers have a 903 prefix.

Accounts Payable – Alicia Villarreal  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Absence System – Jehovana Villarreal  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Athletic Director – Joey Cluley  
2110 North Edwards 434-8585

Bilingual Education - Eva Beles  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Boys' Athletic Coordinator – Joey Chism  
2110 North Edwards 575-2110

Budget & Finance – Stacie Thompson  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000x1039

Career and Technology Education – Jay Silman  
2110 North Edwards 575-2020x1510

Certification/Fingerprinting – Mercedes Marroquin  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Communication – Kelly Cowan  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Curriculum – Mike Lide  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Disciplinary / Alternative Ed Programs- Hayes Lesher  
2110 North Edwards 903-575-2020

Drug Free Schools – Ronnie Humphrey  
2110 North Edwards 575-2141

Dyslexia/504 – Mike Lide  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Early Head Start / Head Start– Jamie Cook  
1602 West Ferguson 903-575-2092

Employee Access/KRONOS –Liliana Olivas  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Employee Benefits – Kylie Collier  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Federal Programs – Shirley Peterson  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Food Services – Pamela Jennings  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Girls' Athletic Coordinator – David Zaldivar  
2110 North Edwards 434-8592

Human Resources – Craig Bailey  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

KRONOS – Liliana Olivas  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Library Services – Dustin Cook  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Maintenance/Operations – Russell Luck  
2110 North Edwards 903-434-8666

Payroll – Liliana Olivas  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

PEIMS –Gwen Hill  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Purchasing – Laura Morgan  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Security / Police – Ronnie Humphrey  
2110 North Edwards 575-2141

Special Education – Justin Chambers  
2230 North Edwards 575-2079

State Programs – Shirley Peterson  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Student Assessment – Shelley Derrick  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

New Teacher Orientation – Craig Bailey  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Student Services-Student Health / Nursing – Dustin Cook  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Substitute Teachers – Jehovana Villarreal  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Technology - Director – Noe Arzate  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Transportation – Durham Transportation  
2110 North Edwards 575-2090

Travel – Alice Villarreal  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Visually Impaired Education – Justin Chambers  
2230 North Edwards 575-2079

Warehouse – Aaron Taylor  
2230 North Edwards 575-2000

Homeless Education – Shelley Derrick  
2230 North Edwards                    575-2000

Webmaster – Courtney Marshall  
2230 North Edwards                    575-2000