



**Parent / Student Handbook
&
Code of Conduct**

Board Approved 3/29/18

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MERIDIAN SCHOOL CULTURE & CLIMATE

MISSION STATEMENT

Meridian School's mission is to provide an invigorating educational environment that develops responsible citizens who can artfully navigate our complex world and enjoy a good life with others. Each student will engage in diverse investigations, disciplined inquiry, and integrated service learning to cultivate intercultural awareness, creativity and mental acuity.

CULTURE STATEMENT

At Meridian School, we believe that we can fulfill the dual nature of our mission of the high standards and expectations of the IB curriculum with authentic, relevant inquiry experiences in a caring and supportive environment.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

A major part of the Meridian charter is alignment with the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. Becoming a Primary Years Program (PYP), Middle Years Program (MYP), or Diploma Program (DP) requires a self-study and lengthy application process for each program. The PYP was authorized in March, 2013 and reauthorized in 2017; the DP was authorized in March, 2014; and the MYP was authorized in May 2017. The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a not-for-profit foundation, motivated by its educational mission, and focused on the student.

An important part of the culture of IB schools is the Learner Profile. Students, parents, and staff members at Meridian are asked to learn and place high importance on these attributes (as listed below). Members of the Meridian community will value and identify themselves as:

Inquirers - We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

Knowledgeable - We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

Thinkers - We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators - We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

Principled - We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

Open-minded - We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring - We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

Risk-takers - We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

Balanced - We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, spiritual and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

Reflective - We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

WHAT IS A CHARTER SCHOOL?

Charter schools were authorized by the Texas Legislature in 1995 to provide an alternative to traditional public schools. Open-enrollment charter schools are, by choice, public schools that have the flexibility to adapt to the educational needs of individual students, and often provide a personalized learning environment that promotes greater student achievement. In exchange for some autonomy, charter schools have increased accountability, and must meet the testing standards dictated by the state.

Among other things, Texas Charter schools are tasked with: a) improving student learning, b) increasing the choice of learning opportunities within the public school system; c) establishing a new form of accountability for public schools, and d) encouraging different and innovative learning methods.

Geographic Boundaries

Meridian School is an open-enrollment public charter school, in which all students, except those adjudicated of a crime, living within Williamson County are eligible for enrollment on a space available basis. A traditional public school has small drawn boundaries and families within that district attend that school. A charter school generally has a much larger boundary and is therefore a school to which families can choose to attend should it be right for the child. The boundary for Meridian World School is the physical boundary of Williamson County.

Funding

Charter schools receive state funds based on the average daily attendance of students (same as traditional public schools); however, they do not receive funds from local tax revenue and the majority, including Texas charters, do not receive state facilities funding. Texas Education Agency (TEA) data indicates that charter schools receive approximately \$1000 - \$1200 less in total revenue per pupil than traditional public schools. In the State of Texas, the funding for students follows the student. Therefore, a school is funded based upon the children that attend that school.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Meridian School does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, academic, athletic, or artistic ability, or the district the child would otherwise attend without regard to disability or handicapping condition, in administration or educational policies, admission and hiring policies and other school administered programs.

Educators are responsible for any unlawful discrimination by students under their supervision. Employees should immediately address and report any conduct by students that could be construed as discrimination. Employees may be terminated for failure to report and prevent discrimination.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Sexual harassment is the “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which interferes with an individual’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.” All reports of sexual harassment will be investigated. Any employee found to be responsible for sexual harassment will be terminated.

Educators are responsible for any intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment created by students under their supervision. Employees should immediately address and report any conduct by students that could be construed as sexual harassment. Employees may be terminated for failure to report and prevent sexual harassment.

Meridian has designated Mr. Rick Fernandez, Head of School, to coordinate its efforts to prevent sexual harassment and to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

(Meridian School Phone 512-660-5230)

Rick Fernández	Head of School
Karalei Nunn	Founder & Chief Operating Officer
Eileen Kuhn	Chief Financial Officer
TBD	Principal of Primary School (K-5)
Charles Ryder	Principal of Secondary School (6-12)
Elizabeth Petty	Asst. Principal of Primary School
Toby Bermudez	Asst. Principal of Middle School
TBD	Asst. Principal of Middle School
Stela Holcombe	Asst. Principal of High School/DP Coordinator
Anna Brown	Special Education/504 Coordinator
Leah Delafield	PYP Coordinator & Media Specialist
Kaylene Rudd	MYP Coordinator
Haven McMaster	Counselor of Primary School
Nancy Spence	Counselor of Middle School
Carrie Proctor	Counselor of High School
Kathy Gregg	College Counselor
Paige Bender	Compliance Coordinator
Kathy Ilgen	Head of School Executive Assistant/District Secretary

Erin Miller	Primary School Secretary
Kristi Anderlohr	Middle School Secretary
Jessica Kress	Secondary School Secretary
Janette Gaudiesus	Registrar
Kelly Abbett	Registrar Assistant
Anna Cornett	Attendance / Receptionist - Primary School
Shawn Seaman	Attendance/Receptionist - High School
Jan MacWatters	Librarian - Secondary School
Joann Raskin, RN	Primary & High School Nurse
Patricia Crawley, LVN	Middle School Nurse
Jessica Boese	Communications & Volunteer Coordinator
ViP Leadership	ViPleaders@mwschool.org
Board of Directors	board@mwschool.org

CALENDAR

At Meridian School, we believe that a balanced calendar promotes a healthy balance of work and rest.

Meridian's School Calendar has been developed based on the belief that a balanced schedule will contribute to increased student success. It ensures 175 instructional days for students, a one-week fall break, a week for Thanksgiving, a two-week winter break, and a one-week spring break. School will not end after May 31 or begin before August 1. The calendar is located in Appendix A.

ATTENDANCE

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

At Meridian School we believe that teachers and administrators need time for continuing professional development, school-wide strategic planning and time for the reflection and evaluation of their programs.

Every Wednesday, students will be released early to allow teachers and administrators time to attend professional development and school-wide planning. Primary students will be released at 1:00 on Wednesdays and Secondary will be released at 1:30.

Hours of Instruction:

	Day of Week	Start Time	Release Time
Grades K-5	Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.	8:00	3:30
Grades K-5	Wednesday	8:00	1:00
Grades 6-12	Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.	8:30	4:00
Grades 6-12	Wednesday	8:30	1:30

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

At Meridian School, we believe that the classroom is a community; therefore, students must be present in order to create that community and to maximize their learning and growth experience in school. IB is a rigorous program that requires an adherence to school attendance policies for success.

Compulsory attendance for students who are at least six years old as of September 1 of the applicable school year is required by state law Texas Education Code 25.085. The law requires a student to attend public school until the student's 18th birthday, unless the student is exempt under 25.086 of the Texas Education Code. This requirement is enforced through Texas Education Code 25.093 and 25.094.

We believe that students must learn the importance of punctuality and regular attendance as this will also help a student throughout his/her educational experience and will carry over to the world of work. Poor attendance is a major cause of poor grades and other problems which can also result in additional work for both the student and the teacher. **Attendance is taken at 9:30 every morning for Primary and Secondary Students.**

Additionally, as a public school, Meridian only receives funding for days that students actually attend school. Therefore, adherence to the attendance policies is twofold. In order to operate a school with an exceptional educational program without major budget issues, we expect our students and parents to strive for perfect attendance and keep absenteeism to a minimum when this is not possible. Attendance is especially important because charter schools receive less funding than traditional schools. Money lost for each absence, regardless of the reason when your child is absent, translates into fewer materials and fewer activities for our students.

PARENT COOPERATION – STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Meridian requires cooperation from parents in the matter of school attendance and punctuality.

Parents should:

- Schedule routine medical and dental appointments after school hours when possible. When not possible, schedule appointments in the afternoon after the 9:30 attendance is taken.
- The calendar was deliberately planned to be balanced and allows many opportunities for family vacations. Please schedule your vacations during these off times.
- **Inform the office before 9:00 a.m. of any absences and notify the school prior to any planned absence. Emails should be addressed to attendance-primary@mwschool.org (primary school absences), tripleA@mwschool.org (Triple-A absences), attendance-ms@mwschool.org (middle school absences), or attendance-hs@mwschool.org (high school absences). Phone calls are accepted as a form of notification, however phone calls will necessitate a written absence note upon return.** Should a student be absent at 9:30 without notification, Meridian staff may contact parents to ensure that the student is at home.
- Ensure your child arrives and is picked up on time each day. Meridian does not have additional staff to monitor students who are left at school after dismissal.
- **PRIMARY:** Primary students should be picked up by 3:55 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday or by 1:25 on Wednesday. For more information see section titled Arrival and Departure Outside of School Hours.
- **SECONDARY:** Secondary students should be picked up no later than 4:30, unless staying for a club or study hall. Primary students who ride with a secondary student (i.e. "waiters") must be picked up by 4:30, and may not stay for

secondary clubs or study hall. For more information, see the section on Waiters. Families of these primary students not picked up on time will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute late. For more information see section titled Arrival and Departure Outside of School Hours.

ABSENCES

Students are required to be in school except in cases of emergency, illness or religious observance. It is the parents' and/or guardians' responsibility to inform the School of an absence, as described in bold above. Students who are absent without advance written notification to the office for a period of six consecutive days will be automatically withdrawn on the seventh day of absence.

According to the Texas Education Code, students must be present at least 90% of the school days, unless otherwise exempted by the administrators. Because of the rigor of the IB curriculum and the limited public funding sources for charter schools, Meridian School has a standard of 95% attendance. **Nine (9) absences is considered a serious discipline offense, and if this occurs the School has the right to send the student back to his/her home campus.**

When a student reaches five (5) total absences within a six-month period, a letter will be sent home to parents/guardians indicating that continued absences may materially affect the student's progress and enrollment at Meridian School. Nine absences for students may necessitate a meeting with the school's attendance committee and possibly result in dismissal of a student to his/her home campus.

SECONDARY: As the Secondary School has several different classes that meet in one day, in addition to the whole day attendance described above, attendance per class is tracked as well. If a student misses 5 or more meetings of an individual class in a single semester (regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused), a plan will need to be developed by the Secondary Principal or Secondary Attendance Committee to determine what the student will need to do to receive credit for the class. Meridian follows Texas Education Code § 25.092, which stipulates that if a student attends less than 90% of the meetings of a class, credit for the class may not be awarded without such a plan.

Excused Absences

An absence may be considered excused under the following conditions:

1. **Personal illness** (Absences extending for three or more days require a note from a physician. A physician's note may be requested for absences of shorter duration, at the administrator's discretion. Parents should notify the school daily when the student is ill and unable to attend school.)
2. **Major religious holiday** of the family's tradition (See Religious Holy Days section below)
3. **Emergency doctor or dental appointments** which cannot be made after school, accompanied by a note from physician (See Medical Appointments section below)
4. **A death in the family** (reasonable length of time as determined in consultation with appropriate school administrator)
5. **College visit.** If a note from the college visited is submitted, absences due to college visits may be excused up to two days for a 10th grade student and up to four days for 11th and 12th grade students.
6. Other necessary and justifiable reasons as excused by school administrators

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences are any absences that have not been excused as defined above and outlined by the Texas Education Agency. In order to remain current with the curriculum and maintain their educational progress, students will be required to complete make-up work.

***Please note that, in addition to the above mentioned, three (3) tardies are equal to, and will be recorded as, one (1) unexcused absence.**

SECONDARY: Work that is missed or turned in after the deadline due to an unexcused absence will receive the same grading penalties as late work. See the Grading Practices section of the Secondary School Program of Studies for details (click here for a link to its location on the Meridian School website: [Secondary Academic Program of Studies](#)).

Truancy

Any student who leaves school prior to the official dismissal time must check out through the Attendance Office prior to leaving. Students who fail to properly check out will be considered truant. Truancy is any absence without the prior knowledge and consent of the School or that which is in violation of state law and school disciplinary procedures. Students will not receive credit for school days for which they are truant. In addition, parents will be notified and for a first or second offence disciplinary measures such as detention or suspension will be taken. A third offence will be referred to the Head of School for possible expulsion from Meridian School.

Tardiness

Tardiness is disruptive to the learning process and can have a negative impact on the entire class. Parents and students share responsibility for being on time to school.

PRIMARY: Doors open thirty minutes before primary classes begin (7:30). Those students arriving prior to 7:30 are unsupervised outside of the building. This is highly discouraged and may result in calls from the school administration. **Primary classroom instruction begins promptly at 8:00 a.m.** All primary students who arrive after **8:05** are tardy and the parent or guardian must escort the student to the office and sign the student in. **Please note that, in addition to the above mentioned, three (3) tardies are equal to, and will be recorded as, one (1) unexcused absence.**

SECONDARY: Doors open sixty minutes before secondary classes begin (7:30). **Secondary instruction begins at 8:30.** Students arriving after 8:30 must be checked in at the attendance office where an excuse or tardy will be recorded as appropriate. The student will receive an admittance slip and proceed to class.

Unexcused tardies for any class during the school day are cumulative for the semester. Failure to be in class on time will have the following consequences:

- 3 Tardies: Warning from a principal
- 6 Tardies: Second warning from principal, and parent contact
- 9 Tardies: Saturday Detention

Medical Appointments

In order to obtain a medically excused absence, a student must attend at least one class on the day of the appointment and present a doctor's note to the school's office within three (3) school days after the appointment. Schedule routine medical and dental appointments after school hours when possible. When not possible, schedule appointments in the afternoon after the 9:30 attendance is taken.

Religious Holy Days

Absences for the purpose of observing religious holy days will be excused if, before the absence, the parent/guardian submits a written request for the excused absence and documentation of the holiday. All work must be made up for the days missed. A request for work can also be submitted in writing prior to the absence. (Holidays are assumed to be for a single day unless otherwise documented.)

Participation on the Day of an Absence

Students who are absent from school may not be allowed to participate in the Triple A Program or school-related activities on that day or evening. Exceptions may be approved by campus administration only when requested by the activity sponsor. Absences resulting from a student's participation in an organization not sanctioned by the School or on the approved list of activities will not be considered excused without prior approval by school administration.

Return to School from an Absence

All absences will require a note from the parent/guardian and/or doctor in order for the student to return to school. Absences must be cleared BY THE DAY OF RETURN with a written excuse sent with the student, via email to attendance@mwschool.org, or via the website, and signed by the parent/guardian. Notes must contain student's full name, specific dates, and reason for absence. Missing a class or classes without written parent/guardian permission will result in a referral.

Illness

A child who is ill should not be sent to school since this may result in his/her health becoming worse and exposing others. Our policy states that students should be kept home if they have experienced abnormal temperature (100° F or above) or vomiting within the previous 24-hour period.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS

Children may not be dropped off earlier than 7:30 because staff is not yet on duty. Those students arriving prior to 7:30 are unsupervised outside of the building. This is highly discouraged and may result in calls from the school administration.

Primary Student Dismissal: All primary students must be picked up by 3:55 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and no later than 1:15 on Wednesdays. Car duty/ supervision concludes at 3:45 unless there are extenuating circumstances such as weather delays. After car duty concludes, students will be taken to the main office and parents must sign them out. Please call the office if you have an emergency situation.

Secondary Student Dismissal: Secondary students are dismissed at 4:00 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and at 1:30 on Wednesdays. After dismissal of school in the afternoon, unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or sponsor, students must be picked up no later than 30 minutes after dismissal. Parents/Guardians should be aware that there is no adult supervision on school grounds outside the building each morning for arriving students prior to 7:30 am. If students are not picked up at the end of the school day and are not involved in supervised after school activities, 30 minutes after the end of school (4:30 pm all weekdays except for Wednesday, when the time is 2:00 pm) students will be escorted to after school study hall. Students must be picked up from study hall no later than 5:45 pm, or they will be charged \$5 for the first 1-5 minutes late and \$1 per minute for each minute afterwards. Repeated late pick-ups may result in loss of after school study hall privileges.

Families with both Primary and Secondary Students / “Waiters”: Meridian allows families who have both primary and secondary students the privilege of picking the students up together at the secondary departure time of 4:00. This is done so with the understanding that the primary student is supervised by Meridian staff only until 4:00 when the secondary student arrives to take the sibling out to the departure line and the secondary student is expected to look after their primary sibling. If however, the secondary student does not attend school that day or has after-school activities, the primary student **MUST** be picked up at the regular primary dismissal time of 3:30 p.m. or in the case that the students participate in a carpool, the primary student must be picked up at 4:00, escorted, and supervised by a secondary student from the carpool. If the secondary student has extra-curricular activities on campus after school, the secondary student must pick up the primary student and deliver them to the awaiting car prior to attending the extra-curricular activity.

Waiters is an optional program, and registration is required. If primary student waiters are not picked up by 30 minutes after secondary dismissal, a late fee will be charged. Repeated or excessive lateness will result in removal from waiters.

Arriving Late or Leaving Early

Parents must come into the school to sign students in or out. Parents should sign students out at the appropriate office (primary, middle or high school). If picking up students in multiple schools, high school students may be called to the primary or middle school office for pickup. Primary or middle school students must be signed out at their school office.

Early Dismissals

All students are required to remain at school until the end of the day. Any student who leaves school early without authorization is not eligible to participate in extracurricular activities that day. A student may be referred to administration for repeated violations of this requirement.

PRIMARY: Early pick-up of students during the 30 minutes prior to dismissal (3:00-3:30; 12:30-1:00) will not be done except in the case of emergency through an administrator. During this time, students are preparing for dismissal and transitioning to other areas of the building, making it difficult to locate them for the remaining minutes. Please schedule your appointments accordingly.

USE OF FACILITIES BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL

Certain areas of the school will be accessible before and after school for a variety of school-approved activities. Students are required to remain in designated areas and with the teacher or activity sponsor at all times. Students will not be permitted to go to any other parts of the building unless otherwise given permission by the teacher or sponsor.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

ENROLLMENT

Every year, Meridian will take applications for all grades that have openings. As in the traditional public school, all students who apply are accepted with the exception of those who have been adjudicated of a crime. If a grade is over-subscribed, a lottery is held as required by the State of Texas. Students are selected in a blind lottery until all open positions are filled. Students will continue to be selected and placed in order on the waiting list until the list is exhausted. The State of Texas allows exemptions from the lottery process for children of founders, teachers, staff, and siblings of students who are in the school.

Once the lottery process has ended, families will complete an enrollment package with all required data; i.e. immunization records, address, special needs, etc. Should the enrollment packages not be returned by the published date, the student's spot may be offered to the first available family on the waiting list.

Application Period - January 1st through the last day of February annually

Lottery – The Thursday prior to Spring Break

WAIT LIST

Students on the Wait List on the first instructional day of the school year (and those added during the year) will remain on the Wait List through the school year until they are offered a position or the parent/guardian requests removal in writing. Parents/guardians will be notified via email when their child's name rises to the top. They will have a designated number of business days to respond as indicated in the email. If they respond "yes", the student must matriculate by a certain date as indicated in the email. If they respond no, the name will be removed from or move to the bottom of the list as the decision of the parent/guardian. Students who have not been offered a position prior to the lottery for entry the following year will be required to re-enter the lottery for that school year. The State of Texas allows priority admittance to the following groups only: siblings, children of founders, teachers, and staff.

The Board of Directors at Meridian have approved a limited enrollment period for new students in grades 8-12 after school has started in August. New students will no longer be accepted after Labor Day if full-enrollment in that grade has been reached by that time, or the end of the first quarter if space allows.

ADMISSIONS

To be eligible for admission to Meridian School, regardless of school district, students (with the exception of the children of teachers/staff) must physically reside within the geographic boundaries of Williamson County prior to the first day of school. Students entering Kindergarten must be 5 years of age by September 1 of the entering year. Students entering 1st grade must be 6 years old by September 1 of the 1st grade year. If younger than 6, a child must have completed a public kindergarten school program.

Registration

Parents or guardians of new students should present the following items for their child at the time of registration:

- Birth certificate
- Immunization records
- Proof of residence in the school district (lease agreement, if renting; contract of sale or a tax statement, if purchasing)
- Last report card or withdrawal form from previous school district
- Social Security card

WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS

Please notify the school office prior to the day of withdrawal of your child in order for withdrawal papers to be prepared. Students must return textbooks, library books, and other school property (e.g. athletic uniforms) prior to withdrawal.

Student Withdrawal and Return

Families who withdraw a child after enrollment in Meridian School and wish to return during the same school year will be placed at the end of the waitlist regardless of sibling priority. If a student is not admitted, application must be made again for the following school year. An exception is made for military families who leave the area based on a requirement of the military.

HAZARDOUS WEATHER – CLOSED CAMPUS

In the event of threatening conditions, we will take all necessary emergency precautions. If you have concerns about School closure or delayed openings because of weather conditions, please check the MWS website, official Facebook page, your email for a message from the administration, your texting service and possibly the local media. Meridian School, recognizing that our families live throughout Williamson County, will determine closures based in part on other area school districts, but also the needs of our student body.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire and emergency drills are held at intervals throughout the school year. When drills are held, it is important for all students, staff and visitors to:

1. Follow the instructions of the teachers/staff -or- Check the directions posted near each room's exit.
2. Walk. Do not talk.
3. Move quickly and quietly to the designated area.

CAR LINE

All students attending Meridian must arrive by car. With approximately 1000 families, and almost as many cars arriving on the campus in the morning and in the afternoon, families must adhere to the rules noted on the back of the car tags to insure safety and efficiency for all. The car tag, issued annually, and indicating the family's identification number, is to be visible at all times when picking your student(s) up in the afternoon. If you do not have this, you will have to park and go into the receptionist to acquire a new tag prior to picking up your students. This is for yours and your child's protection.

Students may arrive as early as 7:30 a.m. at which time the doors to the building are opened. Parents are asked NOT to deliver students prior to 7:30 a.m. as there is no supervision on school grounds prior to that time.

Primary Departure - 3:30 Parents may begin lining up for afternoon departure at 3:15 in the afternoon to assure access for visitors, vendors, and consultants who need to depart prior to the start of car line.

Secondary Departure - 4:05 Parents may begin lining up at 3:55, but not before, to assure primary departure is complete.

SECONDARY STUDENT DRIVING / PARKING

Student Parking at Meridian is limited. Seniors have priority, and some juniors may get spaces as well (based on a lottery). Students with a legal Texas driver's license may ask the Assistant Principal of the High School for an application for permission to drive to and park on campus. Students must agree to follow the rules and regulations outlined in the application in order to be eligible to receive a student parking tag. Students with excessive tardies and unexcused absences may lose the privilege to drive and park on campus.

COMMUNICATION & INVOLVEMENT

At Meridian School we believe that establishing and maintaining fluid communications with the home enhances a child's success at school.

FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

To foster communication, Meridian School will communicate in the following ways:

- Post current events and other important School related information on the website at www.mwschool.org
- Meridian World School Official Facebook page
- Weekly email newsletters (Primary Pride, Secondary Lions Share, Secondary Athletic, ViP)
- Periodic emails
- Parent education events & orientations
- “Coffee with Administrators” events

Electronic Communication and Faculty Responsibilities

Effective communication is an essential component of any successful organization, and the Board wishes to encourage this type of communication among all Meridian stakeholder groups and constituents. To that end, it is recognized that electronic communication is frequently used to achieve communication between parties on a timely basis. It is important to identify when electronic communication is appropriate, when it is not, and how to best utilize this method of communication for maximum effectiveness in the school setting.

Electronic Communication between parents and teachers shall be used for short and precise exchanges to:

1. Plan or schedule meetings between a parent and teacher or between faculty/staff members.
2. Answer a brief factual/logistical question about a student's homework assignment or scheduling of a test, quiz, or project, (i.e. when tests, quizzes, or projects will be given or when they are due).
3. Announce trip arrangements and logistics.

Electronic Communication on these topics shall be timely and concise. As such, inquiries sent via electronic communication shall be responded to by faculty/staff within forty-eight (48) hours or less of their receipt from a parent or student (weekends and holidays excepted). The same courtesy is expected from parents and students.

Electronic Communication between parents and teachers shall not be used for substantive discussions and conversations. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Discussions about a student's (or students') behavior or conduct, either in or outside of the classroom, on or off campus
2. Discussions regarding a student's (or students') academic performance or any aspect of student life protected as confidential under State and/or Federal law (i.e., special education needs, learning disabilities, discipline imposed, etc.)
3. Discussions regarding teaching methods, subject content, policy or administrative decisions or discipline measures/decisions

All communication on topics such as these shall occur in face-to-face meetings or telephone conversations, as appropriate. Such meetings and/or telephone conversations shall be set and/or occur in a timely fashion.

Faculty/staff members are prohibited from using social media, personal email accounts, or third-party websites to communicate with students or parents about any Meridian-related matters.

AUDIO / VISUAL RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Meridian School does not allow the recording of conversations or meetings with teachers or staff without prior consent of all parties. This pertains to students as well as staff and parents. If all parties consent, the recording should begin with a record of that consent with stated approval by each party. No person will be allowed to do video/audio recording in any learning environment without the teacher's and/or administrator's permission. Parents and students may not photograph other students in the school without teacher or administrator permission.

PARENT – STUDENT – TEACHER CONFERENCES

Refer to 'Academics' section in this handbook.

ANONYMOUS REPORTING OF BULLYING

Meridian strives to maintain a safe, caring, respectful environment. Bullying will not be tolerated. Students or parents who are aware of an instance of bullying are encouraged to report it to an administrator, and it will be investigated per the Meridian anti-bullying policy. Incidents of bullying can also be reported via the [Anonymous Alerts system](#), which can be found under the Students or Parents menu of the school website.

RESOLUTIONS FOR CONFLICT AND CONCERNS

The purpose of this policy is to provide individuals with an orderly process for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and parent complaints. The Board expects that complaints be resolved at the lowest possible administrative level.

The Board encourages students and parents to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate staff member or other campus administrator.

Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Informal Conflict Resolution

Pre-Level 1 Process:

Participation in this informal resolution process shall be **mandatory** prior to the filing of a Level One complaint. The Board expects that every reasonable effort shall be made to resolve a complaint at the informal level. At the informal resolution stage, there shall be an in-person meeting or telephone conference between the principal and the individual to discuss the possible complaint. The principal may obtain the assistance of other administrators in an effort to reach an informal resolution of the complaint. The principal shall have the right to unilaterally extend the time for filing a complaint in the event the principal is continuing the process of informal resolution of the complaint. If however, it appears that an informal resolution is not possible, the principal shall review this complaint policy with the parent and provide a copy of the complaint process.

Formal Resolution

Level 1: Written Complaint to Campus Principal

When a Meridian School student or guardian of a student has a complaint or concern regarding Meridian School, the individual shall first bring their complaint or concern in writing to the appropriate campus principal. The complaint must be brought within 15 business days of the date that the complainant knew or should have known of the alleged harm. The complaint must be specific, and where possible suggest a resolution. The principal must hear the complaint, attempt to remedy the complaint in the best interest of the affected parties, and document the outcome. The principal must respond to the complainant and issue a final decision within 10 business days of the principal's receipt of the complaint.

Level 2: Written Appeal to Head of School

If the individual bringing the complaint is not satisfied with the campus principal's final decision, then the individual may file a written appeal to the Head of School. The written appeal shall be filed with the Head of School's office within 10 business days of the individual's receipt of the campus principal's final decision. The complaint shall include a copy of the written complaint to the campus principal along with a copy of the campus principal's final decision. A copy of the appeal shall also be delivered to the campus principal.

The appeal must be specific, and where possible suggest a resolution. The complaint shall not include any new issues or complaints unrelated in the original complaint expressed to the campus principal.

The Head of School or the Head of School's designee shall respond to the complaint and issue a final decision within 15 business days of receipt of the written appeal.

Level 3: Written Appeal to Board of Directors

If the individual bringing the complaint is not satisfied with the Head of School's final decision, the individual may appeal their complaint in writing to the Meridian School Board of Directors within 10 business days of receiving the Head of School's final decision. The complaint shall be addressed to the President of the Board, and shall include a copy of the written complaint to the Head of School, along with a copy of the Head of School's final decision. A copy of this appeal shall also be delivered to the Head of School. The President of the Board, at the next regular meeting of the Board, shall provide a copy of the complaint record to all board members. The Board's decision shall be decided on a review of the record developed at the Head of School's level. Any action of the Board of Directors regarding the complaint shall be taken in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The decision by the Board is final.

Civil Rights Discrimination Complaints—Cafeteria

Any complaint of civil rights discrimination involving Meridian's cafeteria service will be referred immediately to the office of the Head of School, and will then be forwarded to the Texas Department of Agriculture for possible investigation and action by the State and/or USDA. Complaint procedures, instructions and forms are available in the office of the Head of School. A complaint of this nature will be addressed internally as well, through the procedures outlined above under Formal Resolution, Level 2 and Level 3.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Parent involvement is vital to the School's success and to the success and achievement of each child. Each parent's talents, skills and energies are wholly welcomed toward that end.

Research on student achievement indicates that when parents are active members of the child's school life, the child's academic progress accelerates and self-esteem blossoms. Based on this research, parents are strongly encouraged to be involved by volunteering. It is the expectation of Meridian School that each family will volunteer at least 20 hours over the course of each school year.

The Volunteers-in-Partnership (ViP) organization is a group of parents who coordinate volunteer activities within the school. Parent volunteers do not work within the classroom in an instructional capacity. However, there are many opportunities to become involved, including the Lion Dads group, fundraising, communications, etc. Information on volunteering is communicated by the organization Co-Chairs on a regular basis through emails and on the school website.

GIFTS TO FACULTY, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATION

Gifts, kind notes, and other signs of appreciation are welcome, but please be aware that due to state law and school policy, Meridian employees may not accept gifts of more than \$50 value, nor any gift that might be perceived as an effort to influence the employee.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

Meridian School believes that parents are partners in their child's education and that parent involvement is essential. Everyone gains if school and home work together to promote high student achievement. Your support for your children, and for the school, is critical to your children's success.

Meridian School's Volunteers in Partnership (ViP) is a parent-run, membership-free, volunteer organization which coordinates volunteer activities at Meridian. ViP partners with Meridian administration to support the staff, our students, and Meridian's mission. ViP is not affiliated with PTA, which makes it different from what many parents may be accustomed to. For example,

there is no membership fee; it is independent of any other parent/teacher group; it works closely with school leadership; and it is a new and original group – created to serve our one-of-a-kind school.

In addition, Meridian will communicate regularly with parents through electronic media, including the school website, regular newsletters and whole-school emails. The school will also seek to involve parents by holding informational meetings to inform parents of school curriculum, administrator coffees for informal questions and conversation, and through scheduled parent conferences.

Visiting the School

Before visiting any area of the school, visitors (including parents and guardians) must check in at the school's office. Parents should carry some form of photo identification and check in through the Raptor System. The Raptor Security System has the ability to scan drivers' licenses or state-issued ID cards and perform background checks. All visitors must successfully complete the check before they will be allowed to enter the school beyond the foyer with a staff member.

To ensure the security of our students, doors to classroom areas will remain locked during the school day. Meridian's policy does not permit parents or visitors to be in classrooms unless there is a specific need and prior approval and coordination is done through the administrator and teacher prior to the date. This is an effort to minimize distractions and maximize student learning, as well as to ensure confidentiality and the safety of our children. State law prohibits the interruption of classes, so parents should not attempt to talk to teachers during the instructional day without an appointment.

PRIMARY: On the first day of school, all parents/guardians/secondary siblings will be able to walk their primary student (K-5) to the classroom. Parents will not be able to conference with teachers during this time, as the supervision of children is the first priority. After the first day, parents/guardians/secondary siblings of kindergarten may walk their child to the classroom. Beginning the following Monday, parents/guardians/secondary siblings may drop their child off in the car drop-off area, or walk them to the foyer. Students will be supervised by staff as they proceed from there to class.

Meridian's Primary cafeteria space necessitates the lunch program run from approximately 10:30 – 12:30. Unfortunately at this time there is no space for parents to have lunch with their Primary School child. However, volunteering in the cafeteria is a way to see your child at lunch. Parents are required to attend training for these volunteer positions and to sign up for a 30-minute block of time to assist the Primary School cafeteria monitors. Volunteers assist the staff and all students with their lunch needs. It is not a time for parents to stand by their child or assist them in eating their lunch, however it is a great time to get to know our students! Volunteer opportunities are also available during the day for library times. There is no assurance that you may be able to work during your student's class library time. However, parents are welcome to sign up for blocks of time that are available. A training is required prior to volunteering. Information about these volunteer programs goes home during the first few weeks of school.

SOLICITATION OF GOODS AND SERVICES

The solicitation of goods and services is not allowed on campus by parents and students except during school sanctioned events. While we understand that we have many talented persons and successful companies within our parent community, connections should not be made through solicitation. No printed information may be distributed to staff or parents through the school. Any connection between businesses and the school should be made through the administration. All goods or services purchased privately outside of school should be delivered off campus and not through students.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

UNIFORM / DRESS CODE POLICY

At Meridian School, we believe that the purpose of uniforms is to foster a sense of community and to allow students to focus on what matters most in the classroom, the academics.

The intent of the Meridian dress code is to provide a degree of visual uniformity, thus reducing distractions in the learning environment. This intent informs the decisions made regarding the dress code.

All clothing must fit appropriately, not too tight or too loose, and be in good condition and clean. Hats, hoods, and bandanas are not to be worn in the building at any time unless there has been administrative approval for cultural or religious reasons. Hair styles, color and items worn (shoes, socks, jewelry and hair accessories) that are distracting will not be permitted. School administrators will have discretion in the determination of items that are considered distractions to the learning environment.

Specific Information on the Primary and Secondary Uniform/Dress Code Policy is given in a comprehensive pictorial guide located on the school website under both Students and Parents (to access, click on the following link: [Primary & Secondary Uniform Guides](#)).

Dress Code Violations

Uniform violations are considered a disciplinary issue and will be handled as follows in both Primary and Secondary:

Dress Code Violations - Primary

- 1st Violation: Written and/or verbal warning from teacher or administrator.
- 2nd Violation: Written warning from teacher or administrator.
- 3rd Violation: Written warning from teacher or administrator and parent contact.
- 4th Violation: Discipline referral will be issued with parent contact from administrator.

In some cases, students will be required to correct a dress code violation immediately by changing into uniform from the Clothes Closet or it may require that the parent bring appropriate clothing/shoes to school.

Dress Code Violations - Secondary

- 1st Violation: Written warning from teacher or administrator.
- 2nd Violation: Written warning from teacher or administrator.
- 3rd Violation: Written warning from teacher or administrator and parent contact.
- 4th Violation: Discipline referral will be issued, parent contact assigned, and Saturday Detention assigned.

In some cases, students will be required to correct a dress code violation immediately (e.g. in the case of a student wearing house shoes or torn jeans that are clearly against dress code) which may require that the parent bring appropriate clothing/shoes to school.

TECHNOLOGY USE AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Resources such as laptops, Chromebooks, and tablets are available for checkout by teachers for instructional purposes within the classroom. In these and other uses of technology, all students are expected to abide by the Technology Acceptable Use Policy, which is included in Appendix A of this handbook.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) in High School

In order to increase technology access in High School, Meridian has adopted a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy. Students in grades 9 through 12 should bring a device such as a laptop, Chromebook, or tablet to school daily for use in their classes. Students have the option of purchasing their own device, or they can lease one from the school. Meridian does not guarantee availability of school-provided devices to students who choose not to bring their own device, lease a device, or forget to bring their device to school. The business office will work with families who are experiencing financial hardship to assure that all students are able to participate in BYOD.

Use of Cell Phones

Cell phones, or devices that have call, text, or internet capabilities similar to cell phones, fall under the Meridian policy on use of cell phones.

Students are allowed to have cell phones at Meridian School with the following restrictions:

Students may not use cell phones as cameras to audio or video record at Meridian, unless authorized by a teacher or administrator. Due to the concern for inappropriate use of photographs on social media sites, this is strictly regulated. Violations will be considered a disciplinary infraction as discussed in the Meridian Code of Conduct.

PRIMARY: Students must keep cell phones in their backpacks unless they have the approval of their teacher to have in the classroom. Cell phones are not to be taken to other areas of the building unless approved by an administrator.

SECONDARY:

Middle School: Middle school students may not use cellphones before school, during their lunch, or during school unless otherwise directed by administration. All times during the instructional day (including between classes), require the explicit permission of the teacher.

High School: High school students may carry cell phones and may use them before school, after school, and during lunch, unless otherwise directed by administration. All other times during the instructional day (including between classes), require the explicit permission of the teacher. Cell phones should not be taken to the restroom during class time; they should be left in the classroom. There also may be additional rules and restrictions concerning the use of electronic devices during before or after school activities

such as clubs and after school study hall, as well as other times as the administration deems appropriate.

Students who feel unwell should not call or text home to be picked up without first going to the nurse. The nurse will evaluate a student and contact their parents if the student is excused to go home due to illness.

ACADEMICS

At Meridian School, we believe that education plays a significant role in developing human potential and forming the fibers of social and economic development. We aim for Meridian School to cultivate college-ready, thoughtful and effective citizens who can thrive in our 21st century knowledge-based world. The reality is that persons in the 21st Century must learn “how to learn” and “relearn” concepts and retool skills for emerging and rapidly changing fields of expertise and challenging practicalities in our complex world. Students must be prepared as workers and citizens to successfully navigate the environmental and social organization of regions, global economy, and expanding contact across cultures in the immediate future.

WHAT MAKE MERIDIAN UNIQUE?

THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM

Meridian School will comply with all state, TEA and charter regulations to ensure that each student graduates with a Texas high school diploma. A major part of the Meridian charter is alignment with the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. Becoming a Primary Years Program (PYP), Middle Years Program (MYP), or Diploma Program (DP) requires a self-study and lengthy application process for each program. Meridian School is an authorized IB World School with the PYP (authorized March 2013), MYP (authorized May 2017), and DP (authorized March 2014).

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a not-for-profit foundation, motivated by its educational mission, and focused on the student.

WHAT MAKES I.B. UNIQUE? (text taken from www.ibo.org)

- It offers a continuum of education, consisting of three programs for students aged 3 to 19.
- It has a reputation for high-quality education sustained for over 40 years.
- It encourages international-mindedness in IB students. To do this, IB believes that students must first develop an understanding of their own cultural and national identity.
- It fosters a positive attitude to learning by encouraging students to ask challenging questions, to critically reflect, to develop research skills, to learn how to learn, and to participate in community service.
- It ensures that the programs are accessible to students in a wide variety of schools – national, international, public and private.

The Learner Profile is IB’s mission statement translated into a set of learning outcomes for the 21st century. These are the values that should infuse the culture and ethos of all IB World Schools. Please reference these in the ‘School Culture and Climate’ section

of this handbook.

The teaching professionals at Meridian have written a unique curriculum that fuses IB values and practices with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards. To view the TEKS, which are the state standards for what students should know and be able to do for each subject and grade level, visit the Texas Education Agency website. Students will inquire, make connections, develop conceptual understanding, think critically, work collaboratively, consider multiple perspectives, construct meaning, reflect, and take action. IB helps students to develop critical thinking skills, to become independent, to work collaboratively and to take a disciplined approach to studying. The school also seeks to provide students with an international perspective and to foster a commitment to service in one's community at the local, national and international level.

The Primary Years Program (PYP)

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a non-profit organization focused on specific goals in relation to student education. Meridian is an authorized IB Primary Years Program for elementary age students (kindergarten through fifth grades).

The PYP is built upon instruction through *inquiry* and questioning and the teaching of the whole child through a transdisciplinary (all subjects) approach. Within the PYP it is believed that student learning is best done when it is authentic – relevant to the “real” world – where the learning is not confined within the boundaries of the traditional subject areas but is supported and enriched by them. Much of the teaching in primary grades will be done through the six *units of inquiry* in each grade level. All fall within the transdisciplinary themes of Who we are; Where we are in place and time; How we express ourselves; How the world works; How we organize ourselves; and Sharing the planet. Students work both independently and in cooperative groups to do research, solve, problems, and present findings

In addition to the attributes of the Learner Profile, the PYP also works to teach students that an internationally minded person should develop personal *Attitudes* toward others, toward learning, toward the environment, etc. These attitudes are strongly encouraged and are the basis of our character education program. They include appreciation, commitment, confidence, cooperation, creativity, curiosity, empathy, enthusiasm, independence, integrity, respect, and tolerance. This learning creates students who see themselves as able to make a difference in their world. As a prelude to service learning projects, students in the PYP are exposed to opportunities to participate in *Action* projects and learn to do Action on their own.

Key Concepts help drive the curriculum by helping the learner construct meaning through improved critical thinking and increased coherence across the curriculum. These concepts are: form, function, causation, change, connection, perspective, responsibility, and reflection. Students are taught through the use of questions in these concept areas, which helps increase the depth of their inquiry.

Transdisciplinary Skills called Approaches to Learning help students conduct purposeful inquiry and be well prepared for lifelong learning. Students are encouraged to master a range of skills beyond those normally referred to as basic. These include thinking skills, social skills, communication skills, research skills, and self-management skills. The PYP also believes that education must extend beyond the intellectual to include not only socially responsible attitudes but also thoughtful and appropriate *action*. Students are encouraged to take opportunities to engage in purposeful and beneficial activities to serve others.

The primary curriculum at Meridian has been developed to work well with and complement IB requirements and expectations. The guided reading and guided math programs use an inquiry approach rather than a workbook/worksheet format, with the goal of creating independent and life-long learners. Science and Social Studies are most often taught through IB Units of Inquiry. Parents of Meridian students are strongly encouraged to attend Parent Information Nights to learn about the program.

The Middle Years Program (MYP)

While the Primary Years Program (PYP) for grades K-5 is transdisciplinary, with all the subjects taught in a single classroom and projects that combine the disciplines of language, math, science, social studies, and the arts; the Middle Years Program (MYP) for grades 6-10 is interdisciplinary. This means that students take separate classes in the academic disciplines (known as “subject groups”), while teachers create links in their teaching units between the different disciplines.

The MYP Key Concepts serve to engage higher order thinking and provide a focus for making connections across the subject groups.

Key Concepts

Aesthetics	Changes	Communication	Communities
Connections	Creativity	Culture	Development
Form	Global interactions	Identity	Logic
Perspective	Relationships	Time, place and space	Systems

MYP Subject Groups

Each year in the MYP, students take courses in eight subject groups. The groups are below, with some elaboration of Meridian School course offerings in parentheses. For details on Meridian School Secondary course offerings, please see the [Secondary Academic Program of Studies](#).

Language and Literature (English)	Language Acquisition (French or Spanish)	Individuals and Societies (History and Geography)	Sciences
Mathematics	Arts (Theater & Visual Arts)	Physical and Health Education	Design

In the MYP, students develop their communication, social, self-management, research, and thinking skills through Approaches to Learning.

Global Contexts in MYP provide a starting point for inquiry and help students develop their understanding of international mindedness.

For further details on the elements of the MYP, please see the Secondary Academic Program of Studies (click here for a link to its location on the Meridian School website: [Secondary Academic Program of Studies](#)).

The Diploma Program (DP) -

The Diploma Program (DP) is offered for grades 11-12. In order to qualify for an IB Diploma, over two years students take the Theory of Knowledge course and courses in all six IB subject groups, complete the Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) program, and write an extended essay (EE).

While the Primary Years Program is transdisciplinary and the Middle Years Program is interdisciplinary, the Diploma Program is disciplinary. Cross-subject group units may be less frequent, but interdisciplinary connections are made through the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) class. In this unique course, students explore the connections and similarities between the various subjects and examine the interdisciplinary meaning of knowledge.

IB Diploma Program Courses

The IB Diploma Program curriculum is divided into six subject groups. The IB Diploma candidate is required to select one subject from each of the six subject groups below. Students in their junior (11th grade) and senior (12th grade) years must successfully complete at least three and not more than four of the six subjects at the Higher Level (HL). The other subjects are taken at the Standard Level (SL). All courses are two years in length. In addition, students take a seventh IB course, TOK, over the junior and senior years.

Subject Group	Meridian Course Offerings
1: Language and Literature	HL English Language & Literature
2: Language Acquisition	HL / SL French, HL / SL Spanish
3: Individuals and Societies	HL / SL History of the Americas & 20 th Century World Topics
4: Sciences	HL / SL Biology, HL / SL Chemistry, SL Environmental Systems & Societies, HL / SL Design, SL Physics
5: Mathematics	HL / SL Mathematics, SL Mathematical Studies
6: The Arts	HL / SL Theater, HL / SL Visual Arts, or substitute a second Group 2, 3, or 4 course

Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS)

Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) is at the heart of the IB Diploma Program, and involves students in a range of activities alongside their academic studies throughout the Diploma Program. A particular activity will fall under one or more of the three strands of CAS:

- *Creativity*: arts and other experiences that involve creative thinking
- *Activity*: physical exertion that contributes to a healthy lifestyle, such as sports and other exercise
- *Service*: an unpaid and voluntary exchange that has learning benefit for the student

Ultimately, CAS helps ensure that student academic growth is accompanied by fulfilling personal growth.

Extended Essay (EE)

The Extended Essay is a piece of research writing up to 4,000 words in length that students complete over the second half of the junior year and first half of the senior year. Students may choose to write their EE in any subject area in which they are taking an IB Diploma Program course. With the assistance of an EE supervisor in that subject, students craft a question that they wish to answer, research a variety of sources (and if their EE is in the Sciences, design and carry out an experiment), and write an analytical answer to their question. The EE prepares students extremely well for completing similar tasks in college.

For further details on the elements of the Diploma Program, please see the Secondary Academic Program of Studies (click here for a link to its location on the Meridian School website: [Secondary Academic Program of Studies](#)).

THE MINDUP PROGRAM

MindUP™ teaches social and emotional learning skills that link cognitive neuroscience, positive psychology and mindful awareness training utilizing a brain centric approach. At Meridian we teach lessons based in neuroscience throughout the year. Students learn to self-regulate behavior and engage in focused concentration required for academic success. For more information about the program, visit the Hawn Foundation website at <http://thehawnfoundation.org/mindup/>.

SECOND LANGUAGE

A second language is required by the Primary Years Programme for children ages 7 and up. The primary language program at Meridian focuses on the ability to speak and comprehend two languages. K-5 students will attend Spanish and/or French classes, depending on grade level. Once in the secondary school, students will choose either French or Spanish, and will continue to develop fluency in that language throughout the Middle Years and Diploma programs.

THE ARTS

The arts at Meridian provide a means of communication and expression; opportunities to become skilled; a connection to other disciplines; connections to other cultures; and a means to reflect and inquire. The arts are considered by the IB to be an important part of learning and are valued at Meridian. Students will learn the disciplines of visual arts, music and drama, as well as learning about the arts (the skills and processes involved) and through the arts (artists, perspectives, themes and ideas using the arts). In all areas of learning, the teachers will value imagination, creativity and original thinking. This will be especially evident through the arts. The creative disciplines of visual arts, music and drama are closely connected to each other, as well as having strong links to other disciplines. The creative process is seen as a driving force in learning through inquiry. Students are encouraged to consider the arts as a means of communication and as an expressive language.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The PE scope and sequence identifies major expectations and is considered essential at Meridian. These expectations include body control and spatial awareness, athletics, movement to music, games, and health-related activities. Through PE, students learn the “language” of physical movement. They learn to understand what they can and cannot do physically and become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in this discipline. Physical activity is an essential aspect of a well-balanced, healthy lifestyle and learning through PE and sporting activities builds self-esteem, confidence, cooperation and fitness.

SERVICE LEARNING

At Meridian School, we believe that all students gain from integrated service learning that brings subject matter to life, enhances academic achievement, personal development and democratic civic engagement, thereby cultivating students' discerning judgment and “can do” spirit.

Our service learning program will be integrated throughout the curriculum and will emphasize both service and learning equally through developmentally appropriate, experiential learning opportunities. Students will be encouraged and supported to initiate their own service projects as they see needs in their communities. This begins with the IB requirements of “Action” and the action cycle in grades K-5, continues with service experiences through the MYP, and culminates with the Creativity, Activity & Service (CAS) experience for DP students.

GRADING

At Meridian we believe that assessment should be viewed as part of the teaching-learning cycle in the learning process. The purpose of grading is to evaluate progress, communicate learning goals, set new learning goals, and motivate students.

Grading and Assessment Beliefs

For learners, assessment does the following:

- a) Promotes efficient learning by focusing the student's attention on what is important
- b) Promotes understanding and life-long learning
- c) Promotes self-evaluation and self-monitoring by the use of well-defined expectations and criteria
- d) Motivates learning by communicating progress concerning what a student knows and is able to do
- e) Helps understand how school learning relates to present world and future goals.

For teachers, assessment does the following:

- a) Provides formative and summative data about student learning
- b) Provides diagnostic data to improve learning
- c) Assists instructional planning by providing informed feedback
- d) Helps to determine teaching effectiveness - what approaches and methods work
- e) Helps to determine whether the program is achieving desired goals (program accountability)
- f) Is a tool for communicating to others

For administrators, assessment does the following:

- a) Assists in determining the effectiveness of programs
- b) Assists in determining school and grade-level learning goals
- c) Assists in allocation of resources, including professional development
- d) Monitors student achievement and supports student learning

For parents, assessment does the following:

- a) Provides formative and summative data about student learning and attainment.
- b) Provides information about the child's learning experience in school.
- c) Provides information about future educational opportunities.
- d) Helps provide information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of both the instructional program and the individual learner.

Primary Grading and Assessment

The staff and administration of the Primary Years Program work together to build an assessment program made up of pre-assessment, formative and summative, formal and informal, and self-reflective assessment. Students in grades kindergarten through four receive report cards that are anecdotal, providing parents with information regarding their student's growth on a continuum based on the progress of the student in addition to grade-level expectations. Students in grade five receive numerical grades to assist in preparing them to make the transition to middle school.

Secondary Grading and Assessment

Numerical grades in middle and high school will be assessed to chart the academic performance of students in the secondary program. Grades indicated on the report cards will be rounded grades and the following numerical assessments will be utilized to indicate academic performance:

- A = 100 - 90 points
- B = 89 - 80 points
- C = 79 - 70 points
- F = 69 points and below
- I = Incomplete for extenuating circumstances (to be determined by teachers)

On IB assessments, students will be graded according to the IB assessment criteria for the subject, and based upon student achievement against these criteria a grade of 1-7 will be awarded.

7	Outstanding Achievement
6	Excellent Achievement
5	Good Achievement
4	Satisfactory Achievement
3	Limited Achievement
2	Very Limited Achievement
1	Minimal Achievement

Please consult the Secondary Academic Program of Studies for further details on grading practices in the secondary school (click here for a link to its location on the Meridian School website: [Secondary Academic Program of Studies](#)).

Progress Reports

At Meridian School we believe that information on student progress should be reported regularly and as thoroughly as possible.

PRIMARY

- Meridian School will send home four (4) evaluation report cards each year. The reports will be sent home at the end of each nine (9) week period. Reports will require a parent signature.
- Each primary report card will be accompanied by a Learner Profile Reflection Form. Parents will need to complete the box indicated in response to their student's reflection on an attribute of the learner profile and return to the school. These reflection forms will be a part of the student portfolio which will be kept during their years at Meridian, with content returned to students when they leave the school or move to 6th grade.
- Student-led conferences will be held two times a year in primary grades. The first is held in the first semester and is used to

share assessment information and set learning goals. The second conference, held towards the end of the school year, is to share assessment information and celebrate the learner's accomplishments.

- Parent – teacher conferences are scheduled as needed throughout the year.

SECONDARY

- Meridian School will send home four (4) quarterly evaluation report cards each year. The reports will be sent home at the end of each nine (9) week period. ~~"Reports will require a parent signature."~~
- At the mid-point of each quarter, a progress report for all classes will be sent home with all students.
- At any time parents and students can check the student's current grades in a course using the online grade portal. Please contact the secondary office for login information.
- Parents are encouraged to initiate conferences with teachers when concerns exist. Teachers will periodically initiate teaching team conferences with parents if there is a need.

TESTING

At Meridian School we believe that standardized testing is helpful in providing a summative picture of a child's learning but will not dictate the way we teach.

- STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)/End of the Course Tests will be taken as required by the Texas Education Agency. This test is a criterion-based exam measuring a student's knowledge against a set standard.
- Meridian School is responsible for teaching the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as contained in 19 TAC Chapters 110-128 and participates in the statewide assessment program, to ensure accountability for student achievement. This includes administration of the TPRI (Texas Primary Reading Inventory) in grades K, 1, and 2, the TELPAS assessment for students with English as their second language, and other state required tests.
- In addition to the STAAR test, Meridian School may administer a test which measures students against a national norm.
- In order to prepare for college admissions and the SAT and/or ACT exams, the 10th grade students will take the PSAT and ACT Plan. When taken again in 11th grade, the PSAT is used to determine awards in for National Merit Scholarship.
- Students enrolled in IB Diploma Program courses will take IB exams for those courses at the end of the 12th grade year. Grades on the IB exams are used to determine whether or not a student is awarded the IB Diploma. Furthermore, colleges often award credit for college courses based upon IB exam grades.

AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

At Meridian School we believe that students need relevant, authentic experiences integrated into the curriculum to prepare them for the future. We want to bring the world into the classroom and take the classroom out into the world.

Off-Campus trips, guest speakers, primary sources, role playing and experiments are all examples of authentic, relevant experiences that will be valued and encouraged by all members of our community. Parents will be asked to support of these activities.

PRIMARY: Students will experience off-campus learning opportunities in designated grade levels (currently 2nd, 4th, and 5th). These will be tied to instruction within the PYP Planners. Experiences may vary each year, but will revolve around one of the planner themes. Students will be transported on school or charter buses, dependent upon the length of the trip. Students will be accompanied by Meridian faculty and staff. Dates and information will be communicated to parents in advance of the trip. Cost per student will be based upon factors such as transportation and admission costs, and consideration for fee reductions will be given to students in financial need, such as qualification for Free or Reduced lunch programs.

SECONDARY: Students will experience off-campus learning experiences in designated grade levels (currently 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th) and experiences will be directly related to class instruction. Students in 6th grade will experience a learning opportunity connected to MYP study similar to Primary students but of longer duration. The 8th grade class trip will center around service, and has traditionally gone to Heifer Ranch in Arkansas. -The 10th grade class trip will center around preparation for college and has traditionally gone to Dallas to investigate area universities and an IB College Fair. The 12th grade class trip will center around broadening students' experiences, and will generally be to another country. Students will be accompanied by Meridian faculty and staff. Dates and information will be communicated to parents in advance of the trip. Cost per student will be based upon factors such as transportation and admission costs, and consideration for fee reductions will be given to students in financial need, such as qualification for Free or Reduced lunch programs

HOMEWORK

At Meridian School, we believe that homework should be thoughtful, purposeful, and age-appropriate in both content and time. We strive to promote the trait of the balanced learner in this regard.

In **Primary** grades, teachers will use homework to make connections between Meridian's instructional program and the home. Rather than sending packets of worksheets, teachers will send home a list of activities and options once per week. Parents may then choose when to complete the activities, working around the family's schedule. Activities will include reading and math centered around our curriculum, and other activities tied to the grade level's current I.B. planner. **Homework is considered a vital piece in a primary students learning. It is an expectation that Primary families support homework requirements and academic consequences may be given for non-completion.**

Homework for **Secondary** students is communicated individually by subject specific teacher and due dates are not necessarily weekly. A homework assignment that prepares students for skills or information that are intrinsic to the next class day's lesson will generally be due that next class, while projects might have due dates that extend several weeks. It is important that as students continue to develop, they establish skills of recording their homework and managing their time. Students should record assignments and due dates in a daily planner. ManageBac is an additional resource to consult for homework assignments (consult mwschool.org or contact the middle or high school office for login instructions). Homework will be purposeful and the contribution of homework assignments to learning in class should be clear.

TUTORING

Primary students are offered tutorials before school (7:30-8:00 a.m.) on an as-needed basis. Primary Students who have failed a TAKS/STAAR test in a previous year will be asked to attend tutorials for the subject areas in which the student is below the state standards. These may be on-going, regularly scheduled tutorials and/or intense remedial tutorial sessions prior to the TAKS/STAAR testing. Additional tutoring may be offered based on availability of resources.

Secondary teachers each have tutorials at least twice a week, either before or after school. Teachers' tutorial schedule can be found on the Meridian School website under "Academics" → "Secondary". All students who are not achieving to their potential in class are encouraged to seek additional help through tutorials. Additionally, Saturday Opportunity School (SOS) meets every Saturday, providing students with the opportunity to come to complete work, makeup tests, or seek additional help.

SERVICES

At Meridian School we believe that many people and resources are needed to meet the unique needs of every child.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

Response to Intervention (RTI) supports the work of the campus team of administrators and teachers as they address the needs of struggling learners. Response to Intervention provides a strategic process for early identification as well as the necessary tools for selecting appropriate interventions toward a positive solution for the student and teacher. The team assists with:

- Establishing a comprehensive campus-based process for identifying students who are struggling in the classroom (either academically or behaviorally)
- Developing and implementing early intervention services which address the learning needs of students
- Supporting a response to intervention process for early identification of students with learning differences
- Identifying specific research-based strategies to meet the diverse needs of students in the classroom to prevent unnecessary referral to special education. Provide coordinated early intervening services to struggling students, as described in NCLB and IDEA 2004.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Special Education services at Meridian School include instructional and related services specifically designed to meet the individual, educational needs of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Please refer to the Procedural Safeguards provided by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) at: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/explansaf/>

SECTION 504 / DYSLEXIA

Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

GIFTED & TALENTED

Meridian School does not identify students as “gifted and talented” and does not receive funds for gifted students. All students’ needs are addressed through a differentiated curriculum – which includes our high achieving students. Therefore, there is no pull-out program for gifted and talented students because the IB program focus is on the whole child and the curriculum is designed to meet these needs. The IB curriculum structure is recognized by the state of Texas as being appropriate for the gifted learner. Attend school information nights or contact the office or your child’s teacher for specific information.

ENGLISH LEARNERS (EL)

Meridian School provides services for students identified as English Learners as indicated through the Home Language Survey, district assessments, and norm-referenced assessments.

COUNSELING

Meridian employs counselors for both primary and secondary.

Meridian Primary School has a certified counselor with several years of experience in the Williamson County area. The primary counselor will provide both in-classroom lessons to students, and individual or small group counseling as scheduling allows.—The school counselor does not provide parents or family counseling but can assist families with finding resources and information.

The Secondary School has middle and high school counselors who provide academic and social counseling, as well as a college counselor.

TUTORING

See the ‘Academics’ section of this handbook.

HEALTH

At Meridian School, we believe that the emotional and physical needs of our students must be well taken care of before learning can occur.

Meridian School employs two full-time school nurses (RN and LVN) on-site. Please contact the nurse at the appropriate campus for more information. (See Contacts list on Page 8.)

Parents are asked to keep the School Nurse and classroom teachers fully informed of significant changes to their child’s health in order to enable us to take the best possible care of each student.

MEDICATION

When students must take medication at school, either by a physician's order (prescription medication) or by parent or guardian request (non-prescription medication,) the following procedures must be observed:

1. Medication must be delivered to the School Nurse (or designee) by parent or guardian in the original prescription bottle or over-the counter container. Students are not allowed to bring medication to school (including cough drops).
2. A Meridian School Medication Consent Form must be completed and signed by the parent or guardian prior to dispensing any medication, either prescription or non-prescription. A new form is required each school year. No medication will be dispensed without parent or guardian consent.
3. The prescription label must have the student's name, current date, name of medication, dosage and the time to be given.
4. If dosages should change while the child is on prescription medication, such changes need to be provided to the School Nurse (or designee) from the doctor and a new prescription bottle must be provided with the changes listed. A new consent form must be completed prior to the new dose being administered. Changes will be made with a doctor's authorization only.
5. The dosage of non-prescription medication must be within the manufacturer's recommendation as printed on the label. Non-prescription medication on an as needed basis can be given for up to two (2) weeks.
6. Students may not carry prescription or non-prescription medicine to administer to themselves without a doctor's order on file in the Nurse's Office/Clinic. This order must specify that the medication can be carried by the student. This determination is made by the physician, taking into account student maturity level, level of understanding of self-administration, and instruction by the school nurse. The medication is to be properly labeled with the pharmacy label. **The sharing of any medication between students is strictly prohibited.** This includes vitamins and health supplements. Inhalers, Epi Pens, and diabetic supplies may be carried by the students with parental consent and a doctor's order. Medicines brought to the School and not meeting necessary requirements will not be dispensed by any school employee and will be kept in the Clinic until a parent or guardian verifies the medicine in written form and follows the procedure or takes it home..
7. **Primary and Middle School Students:** Only teachers may keep and administer medication on field trips. A separate "one day only" medication form must be filled out in order for medications to be administered on field trips.
High School Students: With proper documentation, high school students may self carry and self administer medications on field trips.

Parents must pick up all medications at the end of the school year, or they will be discarded. Parents must initial the consent form when picking up medication.

ILLNESS AND INJURIES

Parents are asked to keep their child at home if that student has any communicable illness, is vomiting or if he/she is running a fever of 100° F or higher. Students should be fever and vomit free without fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours before returning to school. Parents must notify the Administration Office in the event their child/children will be absent due to illness (Refer to 'Attendance' section of handbook for further instructions).

The school will contact parents directly in the event of any serious injuries or medical emergencies. Please ensure that the School is kept informed of any changes of contact telephone numbers so that this service remains efficient. If your child needs emergency medical help, the School uses the services of Williamson County Emergency Medical Services. All teaching and administrative staff will have records of emergency medical conditions for students.

With young children, it is very helpful to keep in close contact with the School Nurse and classroom teachers about any health problems your child has however slight they may seem. Even small health concerns can affect a student's behavior or performance

at this age, and it is helpful to us to be aware of any background information, which may help us to better serve your child.

In the event of a confirmed, contagious, reportable disease, a letter of notification will be sent to the student's classroom parents. Parents should notify the school nurse of any confirmed, contagious diseases, including flu and strep throat, chicken pox, staph, impetigo, pink eye, giardia, and salmonella.

Doctors Note to Excuse from P.E. – If a student is ill or injured, a parent must provide a note to excuse their student from participation in physical education. After three consecutive days, a doctor's note is required with a date noted for return to participation.

ALLERGIES

Due to the serious and potentially life threatening situations that can arise due to Asthma and Allergies (including food allergies), it is crucial that the School Nurse be notified of these conditions. Please refer to the paragraph on 'Medication' found in this section of the handbook for specific instructions should medications be necessary.

Senate Bill 27 of the 82th Legislative Session of 2011 established guidelines for the care of students with food allergies who are at risk for anaphylaxis. The commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) in consultation with the SB-27 Ad-Hoc Committee developed guidelines for use by school districts and charter schools. Due to the commitment of Meridian School and its governing body with regard to student health and wellness, policy guidelines have been developed based on SB27 and the DSHS guidelines. These guidelines are available in the Appendix-

NUISANCE DISEASES

"Nuisance Diseases," such as scabies, head lice (pediculosis), ringworm of the scalp and impetigo are contagious and can cause problems in the school setting. Students known to have live head lice will need to be picked up from school. The child may return to school after being treated with a valid lice treatment. The student must report to the school nurse prior to returning to class. Letters will be sent home to notify parents if a student in the classroom is verified as having live lice. Parents should contact the school nurse if their child has had active, live head lice. All communication regarding head lice will be kept strictly confidential.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Immunizations are an important part of public health. Texas law requires students to be immunized against certain vaccine-preventable diseases. In order for your student to attend school, all required immunizations must be obtained or a valid exemption must be on file. Information about required immunizations for students can be obtained in the Meridian School Nurse's Office. Students non-compliant with vaccines or those having invalid exemptions will be excluded from School per law. Below is a list of resources to help you obtain vaccines or answer questions.

- Meridian School Administration
- Williamson County and Cities Health District (512-943-3600)
- Immunize Texas
- 2-1-1 Texas - Three digit toll free number for health and social services information

Any student coming into School to register must be cleared through the Administration Office for compliance with state immunization requirements for school children. Some 30 day provisional enrollment will be granted but **ONLY** if certain requirements are met. Students who have already registered and are delinquent on required vaccines must obtain needed vaccines and be cleared by the School Administration **prior** to starting classes. Texas State Law states that all required immunizations be physician or Health Department verified. Month, date and year for each shot must be indicated. For children needing medical

exemptions from immunization requirements, a written statement by the physician must be submitted at the time of registration. For children receiving exemption for reasons of conscience, Meridian School requires an original Texas Department of Health affidavit form notarized and submitted at the time of registration. These forms are valid for two years and must be renewed in a timely manner if the exemption is to continue. No other forms or reproductions will be allowed. For more information about immunization requirements and exemptions, including instructions on how to submit an exemption request to the Texas Department of Health, visit the TDH site: www.immunizeTexas.org.

FOOD SERVICES & NUTRITION

At Meridian School we recognize that wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being and readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that promote student achievement and overall quality of life.

Meridian's intention is to promote this Food Policy to all school faculty and staff, parents and students. Why is it important to have all constituents involved with the policy? It is important because successful implementation of this policy requires cooperation from everyone in the school. The goal is to provide a healthy, consistent message to students throughout the school environment, not just in the cafeteria.

FOOD PROVIDED TO STUDENTS BY THE SCHOOL

Food Served in the School Cafeteria

In addition to following the guidelines set forth by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and Texas Department of Agriculture's Child Nutrition Program, Meridian is actively working to ensure that meals served in the school cafeteria meet or exceed health guidelines for all students.

FMNV	FMNV are Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value as defined by the US Department of Agriculture and Texas Department of Agriculture. These type foods will not be served to students in the cafeteria. Food items served and sold in the school cafeteria shall to the extent possible be prepared from fresh ingredients.
FRIED FOOD	Foods that have been deep fat fried, pre-fried, flash-fried or par-fried will not be served to students
FRUIT/VEGETABLES	Must be offered daily on all points of service and be fresh whenever possible. Frozen or canned fruits will be packaged in natural juice or water whenever possible.
BEVERAGES	Meridian School will serve only unflavored white milk, unflavored water or 100% juice. Please note, however, that although 100% juices may be a source of vitamins, current research recommends limiting juice consumption due to its high sugar content. Electrolyte replacement beverages (sports drinks) or carbonated sugary beverages will not be served or sold to students.
NON-FOOD	In the school cafeteria, Meridian students will not be served foods containing any non-food ingredients.

INGREDIENTS	These ingredients include but are not limited to: artificial food colorings, artificial flavors, and artificial fats (trans-fats).
FOODS USED FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES	Lesson plans for instructional use of foods shall be submitted to the campus administrator for permission in advance of all food preparation. In the event that a learning opportunity in the classroom involves food or the preparation of food, school staff will appropriately accommodate the needs of students with specific allergies so that all may fully participate.
TRIPLE A PROGRAM FOODS	Food will be served in accordance with this policy. No FMNV are allowed.

Meridian School will maintain a closed campus at lunch for all grade levels.

Competitive Foods

Competitive Foods are defined as any food and/or beverage sold or made available to students that are not defined in the chart above. They are called competitive foods because they compete with these foods. Parents and children may not think of them as competitive foods; they may think of these foods as “snacks and drinks” consumed outside of the regular meals provided by the school. These foods will not be allowed for sale in the cafeteria or as a part of the after-school program.

Foods and beverages provided during field trips, school events or as part of fundraisers should follow these guidelines, however it may be reasonable to deviate from these standards on limited and specific occasions with the prior approval of the school administration .

This also includes foods provided by parents from home for student lunches and snacks. School fundraisers include food sold by school administrators or staff (principals, coaches, teachers, etc.), students or student groups, parents or parent groups, or any other person, company or organization.

The school may allow alternative meals to be sold to students in competition with meals made available by the school food service department (i.e., food sold for fundraising purposes) up to three times per year, as allowed by the State.

FOOD PROVIDED TO STUDENTS FROM PARENTS

Lunches and Snacks Brought from Home

LUNCHES BROUGHT FROM HOME	It is strongly recommended that lunches brought from home not contain “junk foods” or high sugar “dessert” items. If these items must be sent in a student’s lunch, these types of items should be limited to very small portions so as not to detract from the child eating the healthier portions of the meal. Students will not be allowed to bring carbonated beverages (sodas) with their meals.
SNACKS BROUGHT FROM HOME	It is strongly recommended that these be healthy snacks. They should be in single-size servings and not include items with high sugar content. Also, because students often continue working on classroom assignments while having their daily snack, it is requested that “messy” snacks be avoided.
FAST FOOD	Parents and relatives are strongly discouraged from bringing “fast food” products in for students during school hours, especially those that contain foods of minimal nutritional value. Meridian understands, however, that there may be extenuating circumstances. In these cases, fast food brought

to school will be removed from the original packaging and placed into a lunch bag or sack at the school office before being delivered to the student. Parents will not be allowed to bring carbonated beverages (sodas) with their meals.

BLANKET POLICY STATEMENT ON FOOD PROVIDED TO STUDENTS BY PARENTS

In addition to the no food policy for student birthdays, NO FOOD of any kind should be sent to school to be handed out to students in the classroom AT ANY TIME. This includes any kind of miscellaneous celebration or holidays not being celebrated as a school-wide event. Foods sent from home for this purpose will not be distributed and will be returned.

PRIMARY:

Birthday Parties

Birthday parties will not be held at Meridian. Teachers will recognize/celebrate student birthdays as they see fit for their individual classrooms. NO FOOD, 'sweet treats,' candy or beverage items, of any kind, should be brought into the school as part of student birthday celebrations. Foods sent from home for this purpose will not be distributed and will be returned. This is done in consideration of all children, including those that have food sensitivities. Meridian greatly appreciates parent/guardian cooperation in our efforts to protect all students' well-being.

Understanding that children enjoy having birthday recognition, and in accordance with the IB profile attributes of respect and caring, we ask that our parents consider alternatives such as the following:

- Let your child choose a book to donate to the school library or to his/her classroom; dress it nicely in a fun birthday gift bag and have your child carry it proudly to school on his/her special day.
- Hand out non-food and non-candy treats, such as pencils, fun erasers, stickers, little games, etc.
- Donate needed "wish list" items to your classroom (ask your teacher what is needed) or to one of the specials classrooms (like a new soccer ball for wellness, watercolor sets for art class or a Spanish book for Spanish class, etc.)
- Donate recess equipment (ask your teacher in advance if there is a need for this).
- Make a financial donation to the school in your child's name
- PLEASE do not send flower arrangements or balloons to the classroom as they are active and crowded areas. If received, these will be held in the office for your child to take at dismissal.

Allowed FMNV Events

Meridian is allowed three specific dates on which students may be served FMNV foods. Meridian has three approved times: Winter Holiday Event, Mid-Winter Event, and End-of-School Event. These classroom events should focus on activities and camaraderie rather than food. Students will be allowed to have one sweet treat, as well as other appropriate and healthy foods. Parents may be asked to assist the teacher with bringing in foods, and all will be coordinated in advance through designated parent classroom contacts. Other foods can include fruits and vegetables, low sugar snacks, baked vs. fried items, and overall healthy foods.

No candy is allowed in the classroom; this includes Valentine's Day. No candy should be attached to Valentine's cards exchanged by the students. Parents/Students must follow all classroom policies with regard to the exchange of Valentine's cards, party invitations, etc.

SECONDARY

Secondary School does not have classroom parties in the same sense as Primary, though there may be curriculum-related opportunities for food in the classroom, such as students ordering food at a simulated bistro in French class. On special occasions

after school clubs might have food at meetings, such as World Languages club celebrating 16 Septiembre. In all such cases, a note will be sent home informing parents of the food choices notifying parents so that they can express concerns regarding any food allergies or dietary restrictions.

FOOD ALLERGY GUIDELINES

The health and safety of Meridian students is a top priority. Meridian will not only work diligently to accommodate food allergies, but will also teach students how to advocate for themselves and function in a communal eating environment. Students without food allergies will also receive the education and opportunities necessary to help facilitate the safety of their classmates and community.

General Guidelines

- Learning opportunities that include the preparation of food will accommodate the specific allergies of those children in the classroom so that all may fully participate.
- In accordance with Texas state policy, parents may not distribute food to other people's children at any time.
- Sharing of food among the primary students is prohibited.
- Secondary students should know that sharing of food is at their own discretion and they are responsible for being aware of their personal dietary limitations.
- Meridian School will work with individual students with food allergies and their parents to create individual allergy management plans. However, the cafeteria will NOT be a nut free zone.

Food Allergens Including PEANUT / NUT Products

Meridian recognizes the vulnerability of children with anaphylactic food allergies. Please reference the Appendix, Food Allergen Policy Guidelines.

WATER POLICY

Meridian recognizes that water intake is important to health, especially in the Texas heat. For this reason, students will have regular access to fresh drinking water throughout the day. If they desire, students may bring a capped container of drinking water from home for consumption in the classroom and on the playground (please label with their first and last name!). Because Meridian has a commitment to responsible environmental practices, we will promote a Bottle-Free Campus where students are encouraged to use only *reusable* water containers rather than disposable plastic water bottles.

Also see 'Health' section of this handbook

At Meridian School, we believe in a proactive philosophy of intrinsic motivation, focusing on student strengths, collaboration, and communication.

Meridian School promotes integrity, truth, knowledge, trust, discipline and respect in a safe learning and teaching environment.

The Code of Conduct serves all students, parents, teachers and administrators, each of whom has the right to a safe and productive environment. With this right comes the individual responsibility and accountability for maintaining this environment.

The underlying goal of a code of conduct is that students develop the skills and attitudes to become contributing members of the school community. At Meridian School we will endeavor to build an environment that actively involves community members.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE

The Student Code of Conduct is Meridian School’s response to the requirements of the Texas Education Code. The law requires Meridian School to define misconduct that may – or must – result in a range of specific disciplinary consequences including suspension or expulsion from school.

Meridian School’s Governing Board adopts the Student Code of Conduct as policy; therefore, in case of conflict between the Code and the Student Handbook, the Code will prevail.

STANDARD OF STUDENT CONDUCT

At Meridian School, we believe that if we can teach students these attributes of respect and responsibility, along with an invigorating and rigorous curriculum, that each one will be inspired to succeed.

Learner Profile

Meridian School fosters the attributes of the IB Learner Profile in students. This is central to Meridian School education and culture. For more detail on the Learner Profile, please see “Meridian School Culture and Climate” at the beginning of this handbook.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to be principled in regards to academic and non-academic contexts.

We expect students to have integrity with their work. We will not tolerate any form of plagiarism, including downloading and using information from the internet without citing sources. Violations will result in disciplinary consequences in accordance with the provisions of the Code.

A detailed Academic Honesty policy for secondary students can be found in the Secondary Academic Program of Studies (click here for a link to its location on the Meridian School website: [Secondary Academic Program of Studies](#)).

Public Display of Affection

In order to maintain a school in which distractions are minimized and all students' benefit from a safe, respectful learning environment, students should refrain from inappropriate, intimate behaviors on campus or at school-sponsored events.

SCHOOL'S AUTHORITY AND JURISDICTION

School rules and the authority of Meridian School to administer discipline apply whenever the interest of the School is involved, on or off School grounds, in conjunction with or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities.

Meridian School has disciplinary authority over a student:

1. During the regular school day;
2. While the student is in attendance at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
3. For any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location;
4. Cyberbullying or electronic media harassment between two Meridian students, regardless of time or location;
5. When retaliation against a School employee or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
6. When criminal mischief is committed on or off school property or at a school-related event;
7. For certain offenses committed within 300 feet of school property;
8. When the student commits a felony, as provided by Texas Education Code 37.006 or 37.0081.

Meridian School has the right to search a vehicle driven to school by a student and parked on school property whenever there is reasonable cause to believe it contains articles or materials prohibited by Meridian School.

Meridian School has the right to search a student's locker, purse, package or any other container when there is reasonable cause to believe that it contains articles or materials prohibited by Meridian School.

School administrators will report crimes as required by law and will call local law enforcement when an administrator suspects that a crime has been committed on campus.

Meridian School has the right to expel a student for violating Meridian School's Code of Conduct.

GENERAL CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

Meridian School prohibits the following:

Disregard for Authority

- Failing to immediately comply with directives given by school personnel (insubordination)
- Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission
- Refusing to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or principal

Mistreatment of Others

- Using profanity, vulgar language, making obscene gestures, and/or making racial slurs towards others
- Fighting or scuffling (for assault see Expulsion)
- Threatening another student or School employee on or off school property
- Engaging in physical, verbal, or cyber bullying or social alienation (see below for elaboration)
- Engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether by word, gesture, or any other conduct, including requests for sexual favors directed toward another student or a district employee
- Hazing (see glossary)
- Causing an individual to act through the use of a threat of force (coercion)
- Committing extortion or blackmail (obtaining money or an object of value from an unwilling person)
- Engaging in inappropriate verbal, physical or sexual conduct directed toward another student or a district employee

Bullying

At Meridian School, we believe that bullying is a serious offense that can lead to severe long-term problems for individuals and communities. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated at Meridian.

Texas Education Code Section 37.0832 defines **bullying** as “a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another students that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct...that:

- has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or of damage to the student’s property;
- is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
- materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or

- infringes on the rights of the victim at school.”

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying, and is defined as “bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an internet website, or any other internet-based communication tool.”

Forms of Bullying are as follows, but are not limited to:

PHYSICAL AGGRESSION

- Pushing
- Shoving
- Spitting
- Kicking
- Hitting
- Giving dirty looks
- Threatening with a weapon
- Defacing property
- Stealing

VERBAL/WRITTEN AGGRESSION

- Mocking
- Name-calling
- Teasing
- Intimidating telephone calls/electronic or written communication
- Racist, sexist or homophobic taunting
- Daring another to do something dangerous
- Verbal or written threats against property
- Verbal or written threats of violence or inflicting bodily harm
- Coercion
- Extortion

SOCIAL ALIENATION

- Gossiping
- Embarrassing
- Setting up a student to look foolish
- Spreading rumors
- Excluding from group
- Inciting hatred
- Racist, sexist or homophobic alienation
- Setting up someone to take the blame
- Public humiliation
- Malicious rumor spreading

CYBERBULLYING

- Cyberbullying off campus still is considered a school disciplinary offense if it interferes with a student’s educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Property Offenses

- Damaging or vandalizing property, including destruction of data, owned by others (for felony criminal mischief see ‘Expulsion’)
- Defacing or damaging school property – including textbooks, lockers, furniture and other equipment – with graffiti or by other means
- Stealing from students, staff or the school
- Committing or assisting in a robbery or theft even if it does not constitute a felony according to the Texas Penal Code (for felony robbery and theft see ‘Expulsion’)

Possession of Prohibited Items

Possessing or using:

- fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device
- a razor, box cutter, chain or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person
- a “look-alike” weapon, air gun, BB gun or stun gun
- ammunition
- knives of any sort
- mace or pepper spray
- pornographic material
- tobacco products, vapes, etc.,
- drug or tobacco paraphernalia
- matches or a lighter
- a laser pointer for other than approved use
- chemicals such as, but not limited to, gasoline, acid, and lighter fluid.

Telecommunications Devices

Any devices with texting and calling capabilities fall under the definition of “cell phones” in Meridian School policy. This includes, but is not limited to “smart phones” and “smart watches”.

Students are allowed to have cell phones at Meridian School with the following restrictions:

- Primary and middle school students must keep cell phones in their backpacks unless they have the approval of their teacher.
- High School students may carry cell phones. They may use them before school, after school, and during lunch. They may not use them as cameras or to videotape. All other times during the instructional day require the permission of the teacher.
- Students may not use cell phones as cameras to audio or video at Meridian, unless authorized by a teacher or administrator. Due to the concern for inappropriate use of photographs on social media sites, this is strictly regulated. Violations will be considered a disciplinary infraction as discussed in the Meridian Code of Conduct.

Audio / Visual Recording and Photographs

Meridian School does not allow the recording of conversations or meetings with teachers or staff without prior consent of all parties. This pertains to students as well as staff and parents. If all parties consent, the recording should begin with a record of that consent with stated approval by each party. No person will be allowed to audio or video record in any learning environment without the teacher’s and/or administrator’s permission. Parents and students may not photograph other students in the school without teacher or administrator permission.

Over-the-Counter, Prescription and Illegal Drugs

- Possessing, using, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or inhalants at school, or at a school related function.
- Possessing or selling seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount
- Possessing, using, giving or selling paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance (see glossary for “paraphernalia”)
- Possessing or selling look alike drugs or items attempted to be passed off as drugs or contraband
- Abusing the student’s own prescription drug, selling or giving a prescription drug to another student or possessing or being under the influence of another person’s prescription drug on school property or at a school related event
- Having or taking prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs, including vitamins and health supplements, at school other than as provided by the Parent-Student Handbook
- Possessing, using or being under the influence of alcohol at school, or at a school related function.

Misuse of Computers and the Internet

(also see Parent and Student Handbook – Appendix A - Acceptable Use Policy)

- Violating technology use policies, rules or agreements signed by the student and/or agreements signed by the student’s parent
- Using the internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees or cause disruption to the educational program
- Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, or damaging to another’s reputation

Safety

- Using e-mail or Web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety
- Engaging in verbal (oral or written) exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee or school property
- Making false accusations or perpetrating hoaxes regarding school safety
- Engaging in any conduct that school officials might reasonably believe will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence
- Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage
- Discharging a fire extinguisher without valid cause
- Triggering a fire alarm without valid cause

Excessive Absenteeism and Truancy

- Excessive absenteeism, such as missing 9 or more days of school for unexcused reasons
- Leaving school without properly checking out

Miscellaneous Offenses

- Violating uniform standards and dress code as communicated in the Parent and Student Handbook
- Academic dishonesty such as cheating or copying the work of another
- Gambling
- Falsifying records, passes or other school-related documents
- Engaging in actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities
- Repeatedly violating other communicated campus or classroom standards of conduct
- Forgery

Meridian School may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Code. These rules may be posted in classrooms or given to the student and may or may not constitute violations of the Code.

DISCIPLINE

At Meridian School, we believe that the classroom is a community where...

- *Discipline means 'learning', therefore disciplinary actions will provide opportunities for growth.*
- *Behavior is guided through an understanding of intrinsic motivation, not rewards and punishments.*
- *Character building is addressed deliberately through modeling, direct instruction, and consistent follow through and the Instruction of the Learner Profile Attributes (p.1).*
- *Techniques of conflict resolution and reparations are used to promote responsibility.*
- *Community building curricula are used to create inspiring learning environments.*
- *Different points of view are explored*
- *Authentic classroom meetings take place so everyone's voice is acknowledged*
- *Students set goals and learn to be reflective*
- *Teachers guide their students with insight and treat each student as an individual*

Roles of the Teacher / Principal

The heart of Meridian School is in the quality of relationships among our students and our teachers, administrators and staff. Discipline issues are inevitable and anticipated on a small and infrequent basis. The role of the teacher in the disciplinary process is to:

1. Know the student
2. Redirect the student as possible with minimal disruption to the learning
3. Communicate concerns to parent
4. Engage the Principal when the learning environment has been compromised. The principal will choose and implement a discipline management technique based on experience with the situation, the teacher and the student.

Discipline will be designed to improve conduct and to encourage students to adhere to their responsibilities as members of the Meridian School community. Disciplinary action will draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of discipline management techniques. Discipline will be correlated to the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, the effect of the misconduct on the school environment and statutory requirements. Investigations will be completed thoroughly and as quickly as possible. The school will attempt to interview all relative parties to the disciplinary issue.

Communication of disciplinary actions will happen at several levels depending on where and how the situation is handled. Parents

will always be contacted prior to discretionary or mandatory expulsions. Suspensions may occur prior to parental notification; however, a Principal will contact the student's parent or guardian to arrange immediate pick up from the school.

Discipline Management Techniques / Consequences

The following discipline management techniques **may** be used – alone or in combination – for behavior prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct or by campus or classroom rules:

- Verbal (oral or written) correction
- Seating changes within the classroom
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process; the item may be returned only to the parent and/or a nominal fine may be required for the return of the item
- Behavioral contracts with established benchmarks that demonstrate student behavior improvement
- Counseling by teachers, counselors or administrative personnel
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Detention
- Sending the student to the office or other assigned area for short-term removal from class
- Acts of reparation; i.e. making amends for an infraction
- Assignment of school duties
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations
- Penalties identified in individual student organizations; written standards of behavior
- Withdrawal or restriction of privileges
- In School Suspension
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Referral to an outside agency or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by Meridian School
- Other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials

ESCALATING CONSEQUENCES

SUSPENSION

Process for Suspension

State law allows a student to be suspended for no more than three school days per behavior violation. Before being suspended a student will have an informal conference with the appropriate administrator who shall advise the student of the conduct of which he or she is accused. The student will be given the opportunity to explain the incident before the administrator's decision is made.

The appropriate administrator will determine any restrictions of participation in school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular and curricular activities.

Parents will be notified upon a student's suspension and they **must immediately pick up the student from school.**

Reasons for Suspension

Students may be suspended for any behavior listed in the Code as a general conduct violation or expellable offense.

Suspension Consideration

In deciding whether to order suspension, Meridian School will take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see glossary)
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct, and
3. The student's disciplinary history

DISCIPLINARY APPEALS

A parent may appeal disciplinary decisions of Meridian School teachers or administration (with the exception of expulsion) by following the appropriate steps as outlined in "Resolution for Conflict and Concerns". The appeals process for expulsion is detailed in the section below entitled "Appeal to the Governing Board.":

EXPULSION

If a student commits an expellable offense, as outlined in the student code of conduct, charter administrators may expel the student only after due process has been afforded the student, and the Head of School has determined that expulsion is the appropriate consequence. The charter holder shall notify the school district in which the student resides within three (3) business days of any action expelling or withdrawing a student from the charter school.

There are two types of expulsion: discretionary and mandatory.

DISCRETIONARY EXPULSION

Reasons for Discretionary Expulsion

A student **may** be expelled for the following conduct on school property:

- Engaging in serious offenses or persistent misbehavior (see glossary)
- Disciplinary infractions that violate Meridian School's Code while under Behavior Contract
- Criminal mischief
- Disruptive activities (Disorderly Conduct or Assault)
- Disruption of classes
- False reporting (bomb threats, fire alarms, etc.)
- Theft
- Weapons and using objects as weapons
- Fighting
- Sexual Harassment
- Possession, use or transmittal of a prohibited substance or drug paraphernalia

- Possession of any fireworks or ammunition
- Criminal trespass
- Threats, extortion or harassment
- Possessing, using or being under the influence of alcohol at school, or at a school related function
- Destruction of School property
- Bullying (see ‘Bullying’ section under ‘General Conduct Violations’)

Discretionary Expulsion Consideration

In deciding whether to order expulsion, Meridian School will take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see glossary)
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct, and
3. The student’s disciplinary history

Before being expelled a student will have an informal conference with the appropriate administrator who shall advise the student of the conduct of which he or she is accused. The student will be given the opportunity to explain the incident before the administrator’s decision is made.

Expulsion Due Process

If the principal believes a student has committed an expellable offense, the principal may make the recommendation to the Head of School. Prior to taking any expulsion action, the principal will schedule a hearing before the Head of School and provide written notice to the student and his/her parents of:

1. The reasons for the recommended expulsion; and
2. The date, time and location of a hearing before the Head of School, within three days after the date of the notice, unless the parents and Head of School agree in writing to an alternate time. The notice shall further state that the student is entitled to:
 - a. Be present at the hearing;
 - b. Have an **opportunity to present evidence**;
 - c. Have an **opportunity to examine/question the school’s evidence**;
 - d. Be **accompanied by his/her parents** or another adult who can provide guidance to the student and who is not an employee of the district.
3. The notice shall also state that failure to request such a hearing constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter.

Hearing Before the Head of School

After providing notice to the student and parent of the hearing, the Head of School shall hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student’s parents or another adult representing the student attends.

At the hearing, the School administration shall be allowed to present its evidence of the alleged violation and documented discipline management techniques attempted to correct the undesired behavior if applicable. The student and/or his parents may present evidence and ask questions of the administrator’s adult witnesses in defense of the allegations.

Within 24 hours of the hearing, the Head of School will notify the student and the student’s parents in writing of his/her decision. The decision shall specify:

1. The length of the expulsion (no less than a school year);
2. The procedures for re-admittance to the school at the end of the expulsion period; and
3. The right to appeal the Head of School's decision to the governing school board (or its designee).

Appeal to the Governing Board

After the due process hearing, the expelled student may request that the board review the expulsion decision. The student or parent must submit a written request to the president of the Governing Board within three days after receipt of the written decision. The Head of School must also be copied on this written request.

If such request is made, the board may designate a committee of the board members to hear the appeal. The Head of School will provide the student or parent with written notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting at which the board (or its designated committee) will review the decision.

The board (or its designated committee) will review the record of the expulsion hearing in a closed meeting. The board may also hear a statement from the student or parent (or representative) and from the school administration.

The board (or its designated committee) will hear statements made by the parties at the review and will base its decision on evidence reflected in the record and any statements made by the parties at the review. Consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of the hearing. The board (or its designated committee) will make and communicate its decision orally at the conclusion of the presentation. The decision of the board (or its designated committee) is final.

During the appeal process, the student will be allowed to complete homework and submit for credit.

MANDATORY EXPULSION

Reason for Mandatory Expulsion

A student must be expelled for committing an offense that qualified as a felony under the Texas Penal Code.
(The same due process afforded to students outlined in the Discretionary Expulsion will apply to Mandatory Expulsions.)

READMISSION AFTER WITHDRAWAL OR EXPULSION

If a student has been expelled or has withdrawn prior to a final expulsion or disciplinary hearing, the student is not eligible for readmission to the School, unless the following terms are met:

1. The student must have a clean discipline record at their current school for at least one full year;
2. The student must reapply as a new student and adhere to the school's lottery process (sibling priority will NOT apply to students who have been expelled); and
3. The student must meet with the Re-Admission Committee to present a request for re-admission.

The Re-Admission Committee will be comprised of two teachers and an administrator (appointed by the Head of School), none of whom were directly involved in the original expulsion or withdrawal. The Re-Admission Committee may request current teacher

recommendations for the student, relevant commentary from any counselor with whom the student may have consulted, as well as any other documentation pertinent to the application. The student will be allowed to make a statement to support his request and may submit additional documentation to the committee for consideration. A parent or other adult representative may also be present for the presentation to the Committee. Upon consultation of the presentation and after review of all relevant documentation, the Committee will make a recommendation on whether the student should be readmitted. The decision of the readmission Committee may only be appealed to the Head of School, whose decision will be final.

The student must re-apply and follow the same process for admission as if he or she were a new applicant. However, if admitted, any subsequent violation of the Student Code of Conduct may result in expulsion without the possibility of readmission.

GLOSSARY

The glossary provides legal definitions and locally established definitions and is intended to assist in understanding terms related to the Student Code of Conduct.

Delinquent conduct is conduct that violates either state or federal law and is punishable to imprisonment or confinement in jail. It includes conduct that violates certain juvenile court orders, including probation orders, but does not include violations of traffic laws.

False Alarm or Report occurs when a person knowingly initiates, communicates or circulates a report of a present, past or future bombing, fire, offense or other emergency that he or she knows is false or baseless and that would ordinarily:

- Cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
- Place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or
- Prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly.

Harassment is conduct that threatens to cause harm or bodily injury to another student, is sexually intimidating, causes physical damage to the property of another student, subjects another student to physical confinement or restraint, or maliciously and substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety.

Hazing is an intentional or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in or maintaining membership in an organization.

Paraphernalia are devices that can be used for inhaling, ingesting, injecting or otherwise introducing a controlled substance into a human body.

Persistent misbehavior is three or more violations of the Code in general or repeated occurrences of the same violation.

Possession means to have an item on one's person or in one's personal property, including but not limited to clothing, purse or backpack; a private vehicle used for transportation to or from school or school-related activities, including but not limited to an automobile, truck, motorcycle or bicycle; or any other school property used by the student, including but not limited to a locker or desk.

Reasonable belief is a determination made by the Administrator or designee using all available information, including the information furnished under Article 15.27 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Self-defense is the use of force against another to the degree a person reasonably believes the force is immediately necessary to protect him or herself.

Under the influence means lacking the normal use of mental or physical faculties. Impairment of a person's physical or mental faculties may be evidenced by a pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior or the presence of physical symptoms of drug or alcohol use. A student "under the influence" need not be legally intoxicated to trigger disciplinary action.

APPENDIX

2018-2019 CALENDAR

TO BE INSERTED

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

MERIDIAN SCHOOL ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES IN THE SCHOOL

In an effort to promote the appropriate use of technology in the classroom and within the broader learning environments, the following procedures will guide the use and access to Meridian School technology systems.

Technology Resources Access

Access to Meridian's electronic technology resources is a privilege, not a right. All users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of regulations governing use of the technology resources and shall agree to allow monitoring of their use and to comply with all policies, regulations and guidelines.

Noncompliance may result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and other disciplinary action consistent with Meridian policies and the Meridian Parent/Student Handbook. Violations of law may result in disciplinary action by Meridian, in addition to any action taken by law enforcement.

The school's information technology resources, including Internet access, are provided for educational purposes. Adherence to the following policy is necessary for continued access to the school's technological resources:

Students must

1. Respect and protect the privacy of others.
 - Use only assigned accounts.
 - Use only his/her flash drive and be responsible for its appropriate content and security.
 - Not view, use, or copy passwords, data, or networks to which they are not authorized.
 - Not distribute private information about others or themselves, this includes, but is not limited to, personal addresses and telephone numbers.
 - Not use social media on Meridian systems.
2. Respect and protect the integrity, availability, and security of all electronic resources.
 - Observe all network security practices, as posted.
 - Report security risks or violations to a teacher or administrator.
 - Not destroy or damage data, networks, or other resources or storage devices that do not belong to them..
 - Not disable or attempt to disable content filtering devices on Meridian's technology resource system.
 - Not install or attempt to install any software or public domain programs on Meridian computers or technology system.
 - Avoid actions that are likely to increase the risk of introducing viruses to the system, such as opening email messages from unknown senders and loading data from unprotected computers.
3. Respect and protect the intellectual property of others.
 - Not infringe copyrights (no making illegal copies of music, games, or movies!).
 - Not plagiarize.

4. Respect and practice the principles of community.

- Not use another person's user ID/login or personal storage device.
- Communicate only in ways that are kind and respectful.
- Report threatening or discomfoting materials to a teacher.
- Not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that violates the school's code of conduct (such as messages that are pornographic, threatening, rude, discriminatory, or meant to harass).
- Not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that is illegal (such as obscenity, stolen materials, or illegal copies of copyrighted works).
- Not use the resources to further other acts that are criminal or violate the school's code of conduct.
- Not send spam, chain letters, or other mass unsolicited mailings.
- Not buy, sell, advertise, or otherwise conduct business, unless approved as a school project.

5. Cell Phone Use: Students must follow the cell phone policy as stated in the Student/Parent Handbook. Note: Cell phones are never to be used as cameras or to access the internet. (Accessing the internet from personal electronics such as cell phones do NOT have the information monitoring filters that exists on equipment owned and managed by the School.)

Consequences for Violation. Violations of these rules may result in disciplinary action, including the loss of a student's privileges to use the school's information technology resources.

Supervision and Monitoring. School and network administrators and their authorized employees monitor the use of information technology resources to help ensure that uses are secure and in conformity with this policy. Administrators reserve the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school's information networks and/or a student's flash drive in order to further the health, safety, discipline, or security of any student or other persons, or to protect property. They may also use this information in disciplinary actions, and will furnish evidence of crime to law enforcement.

PARENTS, PLEASE DISCUSS THESE RULES WITH YOUR STUDENT TO ENSURE HE OR SHE UNDERSTANDS THEM.

THESE RULES ALSO PROVIDE A GOOD FRAMEWORK FOR YOUR STUDENT'S USE OF COMPUTERS AT HOME, AT LIBRARIES, OR ANYWHERE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE www.cybercrime.gov.

POLICY GUIDELINES FOR THE CARE OF STUDENTS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

Meridian School Policy Guidelines for the Care of Students With Food Allergies

Introduction

Senate Bill 27 of the 82nd Legislative Session of 2011 established guidelines for the care of students with food allergies who are at-risk for anaphylaxis. The commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) in consultation with the SB-27 Ad-Hoc Committee developed guidelines for use by school districts and charter schools. Due to the commitment of Meridian School and its governing body with regard to student health and wellness, the following policy guidelines have been developed based on SB27 and the DSHS guidelines.

A food allergy is an abnormal response to a food that is triggered by the body's immune system and symptoms range from mild to severe and may be life-threatening. A recent report indicates an 18 percent increase in food allergies among school aged children in a recent ten year period. Because of the amount of time students spend in school, accidental contact with foods of concern and allergic reactions are likely to occur at school. Eight foods account for over 90 percent of allergic reactions: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, soy and wheat. However, all food has the potential of causing a reaction. Anaphylaxis is a serious reaction that has rapid onset and may be life-threatening, especially if the administration of epinephrine, the only treatment for anaphylaxis, is not administered quickly. Meridian School is committed to building a collaborative partnership with the students, parents, healthcare providers and school staff in order to promote the physical safety of children who are at-risk.

Signs and Symptoms

In the case of life-threatening food allergy reactions, more than one system of the body is involved. The mouth, throat, nose, eyes, ears, lung, stomach, skin, heart, and brain can all be affected. The most dangerous symptoms include breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which is potentially fatal.

Body System	Sign or Symptom
Mouth	Tingling, itching, swelling of the tongue, lips or mouth; blue/grey color of the lips
Throat	Tightening of throat; tickling feeling in back of throat; hoarseness or change in voice
Nose/Eyes/Ears	Runny, itchy nose, redness and/or swelling of eyes; throbbing in ears
Lung	Shortness of breath; repetitive shallow cough; wheezing
Stomach	Nausea; vomiting; diarrhea; abdominal cramps
Skin	Itchy rash; hives; swelling of face or extremities; facial flushing
Heart	Thin weak pulse; rapid pulse; palpitations; fainting; blueness of lips, face or nail beds; paleness

Treatment

Epinephrine is the first-line treatment for serious allergic reactions. It is generally prescribed as an auto-injector device (Epipen or Auvi-Q) that is relatively simple to use. Because of the risks involved, studies clearly favor epinephrine administration through an epinephrine injection rather than waiting for symptoms to subside. Reactions can occur immediately or up to two hours following exposure. Initial symptoms are often followed by a delayed wave of symptoms two to four hours later. While initial symptoms may respond to epinephrine, the delayed response may not. Therefore, it is imperative that following the administration of the Epipen, the student be transported by emergency services to the nearest hospital emergency department, even if the symptoms appear to have resolved. .

School Management

Meridian School is committed to the following four-phase approach to address the needs of students:

1. Identification of students with food allergies at-risk for anaphylaxis
2. Development of an IHP (Individual Health Plan) for students in coordination with parents and school staff, including health-care personnel, which addresses student placement in the school setting and specific health needs
3. Training for school staff on anaphylaxis and emergency response
4. Regular review of policy and procedures

The School Nurse will coordinate the development of the IHP in conjunction with administrators and/or their designee. An initial IHP meeting involving the nurse, parents of the student addressed, administrator/counselor, teacher, and other personnel as appropriate, will be scheduled at the beginning of the school year and will be held annually unless need dictates a meeting prior to the annual date. The School Nurse will receive ongoing training in the management of food allergies, including the administration and storage of epinephrine (Epipens) and will provide this training to ALL school staff (including contract cafeteria representatives). The training will include information about food allergens and the hazards of foods within the school, how to respond when a child exhibits signs and symptoms, how to read the IHP, administration of the epinephrine, and procedures for notification of emergency personnel. In addition, the school nurse will assist with providing training to students regarding the need to protect students with allergies within the classroom and cafeteria. The School Nurse and school staff will work together to implement IHP objectives and student specific strategies.

Identification of Students With Food Allergies At-Risk for Anaphylaxis

Meridian School maintains epinephrine auto-injectors for the emergency treatment of anaphylaxis (a serious and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction). In accordance with Texas Education Code, Chapter 38, nurses and other designated (and trained) school personnel can administer auto-injectable epinephrine to anyone who is reasonably believed to be experiencing a life-threatening allergic reaction. An immediate 911 call and transport by ambulance to an emergency room is required any time auto-injected epinephrine is administered. The school's emergency epinephrine is not intended to replace student specific orders.

It is imperative that parents provide accurate health information to the school in order to promote the safety of their child(ren). Meridian School enrollment forms contain a section where parents must address student health issues, including food allergies (both the type of allergy and severity). The School Nurse and Registrar will monitor enrollment forms to identify students with potential risk. The School Nurse will make contact with each family listed to

understand the child's health issue, the dietary concerns, and any additional information necessary, possibly including contact with the child's medical team if appropriate. Additional registration forms will be required on each identified student giving additional and specific information prior to the IHP meeting.

Development of an IHP

Under the direction of the School Nurse, and with a committee composed of the student (if age appropriate), parents, other appropriate school staff, and administrator/counselor or designee, an Individual Health Plan will be developed for each identified student. The plan will include information and instructions specific to the needs of that child. This information will be provided to all staff members who have regular contact with the student (administration, classroom teacher, specialist teachers, etc.) and will be on file with the school nurse.

Environmental Controls

Meridian School will work to protect students from exposure to allergens to which they are sensitive. While the school does not have the ability to control all foods within the building, school personnel will work to provide information to parents with regard to food allergies and the responsibilities we share for all Meridian School students. Classroom snacks and lunches may be brought from home and are sometimes difficult to identify, however the school will work to educate parents to limit unintended exposure. Foods are not to be consumed in the hallways and common areas. Food-sharing in the cafeteria is prohibited, and school projects do not include food products. Campus-wide policies prohibit all foods in recognition of student birthdays, holidays, etc. and any which are delivered to the school are not accepted and/or returned to parents. In addition, foods for the three allowed school "parties" held per year are regulated by the classroom teacher with consideration of student needs.

Review of Policy and Procedures

A yearly administrative review will be provided to the Board by the Head of School and/or appropriate school personnel regarding current changes in state policy or recommended management of food allergies in the school setting; the school's incident report summary, and recommendations for changes to the current policy and procedures. This will ensure that the most current information is utilized in providing for the safety of Meridian students. For those students who have experienced an allergic reaction at school, additional review by the IHP committee will help in promoting safety upon the child's return to school.

Responsibilities

Responsibility of the Family

In promoting a safe school environment for children with food allergies, all parties involved should work as a team for the sole benefit of the child. Parents of the students will:

- Notify the school of the child's allergies in accordance with TEC, Section 25.0022
- Work with the campus IHP (Individual Healthcare Plan) management team to create and review IHP if needed
- Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a physician using the form provided by the school
- Provide properly labeled medications and replacement medications after use or upon expiration

- Educate the child in the self-management of their food allergy including:
 - o Safe and unsafe food
 - o Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe food
 - o Symptoms of allergic reactions
 - o Not trading foods with others
 - o Not eating anything with unknown ingredients
 - o How and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy-related problem
 - o How to read food labels (age appropriate)
 - o The importance of carrying and administering their personal medications as prescribed (age appropriate)
- Review policies and procedures with school staff, child's physician, and the child if age appropriate after a reaction has occurred
- Provide current and correct emergency contact information and update as needed

Responsibility of the School Staff

In promoting a safe school environment for children with food allergies, all parties involved should work as a team for the sole benefit of the child.

Administration or Designee will:

- Serve on the IHP Management team and attend meetings
- Facilitate development, implementation and monitoring of an allergy guidelines policy
- Develop an emergency response plan with the ability to modify to meet special needs of students
- Support faculty, staff and parents in implementing the policy and IHPs
- Coordinate training and education of faculty and staff
- Communicate with parents if students experience an allergic reaction at school
- Have a plan in place when there is not a school nurse available

The School Nurse will:

- Review enrollment information and conduct meetings with parents who indicate a diagnosis of a life-threatening allergic condition
- Coordinate the development of an IHP if appropriate through the IHP Management team
- Ensure proper completion of all related documents – with signatures
- Train faculty and staff on food allergy information and proper administration of epinephrine
- Provide discussion that is age appropriate with children in classes of students with allergy
- Periodically check medications for expiration dates and notify parents to obtain new medication
- Arrange for a contingency plan in case of absence of the nurse

The Classroom Teacher/Specialist will:

- Review the IHP of all student(s) in the class
- Develop plan as a part of the IHP team
- Keep accessible the IHP

- Make sure volunteers, student teachers, aides, and substitutes are informed of the necessary safeguards
- Coordinate with school nurse to provide a lesson on food allergies for the class as age appropriate
- Educate classmates to avoid endangering, isolating, stigmatizing, or harassing students with allergies; enforce school rules
- Work with school nurse to educate other parents about the need for consideration of food allergies in the classroom
- Participate with planning for students re-entry into school after having a reaction
- Establish procedures for snack - including washing hands before and after snacks and lunch
- Prohibit students from sharing or trading snacks
- Follow school guidelines / food policy

Conclusion

Given the increasing occurrence of food allergy reactions in children in the school setting, the school plays a major role in ensuring the health and safety of students. Meridian School takes this role seriously and asks that all parents within the Meridian school community acknowledge and accept their responsibility in assisting the school to provide a healthy environment for all children.