

Mercer County Handbook

Mercer County High School Students:

The information in this book is designed to acquaint you with the policies and procedures governing the operation of Mercer County High School during the upcoming year. In order to become familiar with its contents, you will be expected to read each topic carefully and sign that you have read the document.

It is necessary to have guidelines and rules so as to promote fair and consistent treatment of all students. It is important for you as a student to maintain a positive attitude toward education thus ensuring a pleasant and successful high school career.

Mercer County High School's reputation is a reflection of your actions. Take pride in your school and be part of a great tradition.

Kathy Albert, Principal

The provisions of this handbook are not to be considered an irrevocable contractual commitment between the school and the student. Rather, the provisions reflect the current status of the rules and procedures as currently practiced, and are subject to change. These rules apply to students while they are at school and also apply to athletics, student clubs/organizations, as well as school sponsored activities occurring off-campus.

The handbook is only a summary of the board policies governing the district. These policies are available to the public at the unit office. In addition, statements in the handbook may be amended during the year without notice.

MERCER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

We, the staff of Mercer County High School, are committed to developing life-long learners who value themselves, contribute to their community, and succeed in a changing world.

We will know we are accomplishing our mission when our students are: self-directed learners; collaborative workers; complex thinkers; community contributors; and quality citizens.

This handbook has been approved by the Board of Education as the official student handbook.

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

Occasionally, school and/or sporting events are postponed or cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. Most sports-related postponements and cancellations will be announced on the district website. All school-related announcements will be aired by the following radio and television stations.

Television	Radio-FM		Radio-AM
KLJB FOX (18)	WRMJ 102.3	KFM 105.3	WOC 1420
WHBF (14)	WLLR 103.7	WAAG 94.9	WFXN 1230
KWQC (6)	KCQQ 106.5	WVIK 90.1	WGIL 1400

WQAD (8) KUUL 101.3 WLSR 92.7
 KMXG 96.1

ACADEMIC PROGRAM
REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

Mercer County High School Graduation Requirements	Mercer County H.S. Class of 2013 and Beyond (and Aledo Classes of 2010, 2011, 2012)	Westmer (Class of 2012)	Westmer (Classes of 2010 & 2011)
English (4 credits) English I, English II, English III, & English IV or English Comp. I & II	4 credits total	4 credits total	4 credits total
Social Science (2 credits) American History (1 credit) Civics (1/2 credit) Social Science Elective (1/2 credit)	2 credits total (1/2 credit Civics as freshman)	2 credits total (1/2 credits Civics as soph., junior or senior)	2 credits total (1/2 credits Civics as Junior or Senior)
Mathematics (3 credits) Algebra I (1 credit) Geometry content (1 credit) Additional Math (1 credit)	3 credits total	3 credits total	3 credits total
Science (2 credits)	2 years total	2 credits total Physical Sci. (1 cr.) Bio. or Ap. Science (1 cr.)	2 credits total Physical Sci. (1 cr.) Bio. or Ap. Science (1 cr.)
Physical Education (3 1/2 credits)	3 1/2 credits total	3 1/2 credits total	3 1/2 credits total
Health (1/2 credit)	1/2 credit total	1/2 credit total	1/2 credit total
Consumer Education (1/4 or 1/2 credit) (Cons. Ed, Econ, or Resource Management)	1/4 credit total (Taken opposite Dr. Ed.)	1/4 credit total (Taken opposite Dr. Ed.)	1/2 credit total of (Cons. Ed, Econ, or Resource Mgt.)
Required Electives (1 credit) Foreign Language, Vocational Education, Art or Music	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit
Required credits	16.25	16.25	16.5
Additional Electives	10.75	9.75	Grads 2010 (7.5 credits) Grads 2011 (8.5 credits)
Total credit to graduate from Mercer County High School	Mercer County H.S. Grads of 2013 and Aledo Grads of 2010, 2011, & 2012 27 credits	Westmer Grads. of 2012 26 credits	Westmer Grads of 2010 24 credits Westmer Grads of 2011 25 credits

Graduation requirements at Mercer County High School meet the requirements of the State Code and the State Board of Education.

One credit is earned by successfully completing a year-long course, and ½ credit is earned for successful completion of semester long courses. Specific courses required within each department are outlined in the Course Description Handbook that is prepared for registration. In addition, students shall have passed an examination of the Declaration of Independence, the Flag of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Illinois.

Senate Bill 2769 requires all students to take the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) as a condition of receiving a regular high school diploma, unless exempted because of a specific circumstance. This test is administered to students in the spring of their junior year.

To proceed normally towards graduation, a student must complete at least 7 credits per year. Students must enroll in seven classes with a study hall or may enroll in eight classes. Juniors and Seniors taking Athletic P.E. will enroll in seven classes and study hall or 8 classes. In addition, students who attend school on a full-time basis (taking at least seven classes per semester) throughout their high school career, and who meet certain criteria, may be eligible for recognition, including: appearing on the Honor Roll, achieving Top Ten Academic Student status, and receiving Society for Academic Achievement recognition.

According to Public Act: 94-0916, a student's driver's license or instructional permit shall be cancelled if a student under 18 years of age drops out of school.

Schedule changes are made during a specific block of time (as determined by the counselor) at the beginning of each semester. It is the student's responsibility to notify the counselor of a desired change during that period of time. Oftentimes, certain criteria must be met before a change can be made.

No pupil shall be required to take or participate in any class or course on AIDS instruction or family life, if the pupil's parent or guardian submits a written objection.

REPORTING SYSTEM

Report cards are issued approximately one week after the close of each quarter. Parents of students doing unsatisfactorily at mid-term and other appropriate times will be notified and a conference arranged if the parents desire.

GRADUATION-STUDENTS WITH IEP'S

A student with a disability who will have completed 4 years of high school at the end of a school year will be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony of the student's high school graduating class and receive a certificate of attendance, if the student's individualized

education program prescribes services beyond the student's 4 years of high school.

GRADING SYSTEM

The grades reported may be interpreted as follows:

93-100	A – Mark of distinction
85-92	B – Very creditable work
77-84	C – Average work
69-76	D – Below average
0-68	F – Failing; no credit given

Cumulative grade averages for all academic work may generally be interpreted as per the following scale:

3.6– 4.0	A
2.6 – 3.5	B
1.6 – 2.5	C
.6 – 1.5	D
0	F

Attitude will be considered an important part of a student's earned grade. Physical Education, Band, Chorus, Drivers Education, and Consumer Management are included when figuring grade point average. Pass/fail classes are omitted when figuring grade point averages.

Quality points will be issued for successfully completed AP classes.

STUDY HALLS

The study hall and library media center may be used during a scheduled study hall period. As a study center, it must meet the same standards of behavior as an academic classroom. The following are guidelines to begin this school year.

1. No talking, except by permission from the teacher. Group study will be allowed at the discretion of the supervisor.
2. Restroom and locker trips will be limited. Daily trips should not be an expected privilege; many times those needs can be taken care of between classes.
3. To leave the study hall, students must receive a pass from the supervisor and sign out.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

Students who do not complete the required work of a course may have their grades reported as incomplete, in extenuating circumstances, with administrator approval. An incomplete grade will become an F on the permanent records, if a student fails to complete outstanding work within a two week period after returning to school.

MAKE-UP

Students are allowed up to two days outside of school time to make up work for absences, but the student may be expected to complete work in a shorter period in the case of a lengthy absence (ie: prearranged absence). If a student is absent on a day on which a previously assigned

test is given, he/she should be prepared to take the test on the day he returns. If a student misses only part of a day, the student should contact the teacher whose class was missed in order to be prepared for the next class meeting. With administrative approval, in extenuating circumstances, an individual plan for completing make-up work may be developed. Students will receive ½ credit for make-up work associated with unexcused absences.

HONOR ROLL

Full time students at Mercer County High School who are enrolled in at least seven classes per semester, and who meet certain grade criteria, may be named to the Honor Roll at the conclusion of each quarter and each semester. Students with a grade point average of 3.75 and higher are placed on the Faculty List. Students with grade averages of 3.0 – 3.75 are placed on the Honor Roll. Honor Roll will be compiled approximately one week after the end of the marking period and will be published for grades earned during the first and third quarters and at the conclusion of each semester.

TOP TEN ACADEMIC STUDENTS

The top ten academic students, based upon their accumulated grade point average, and full time student status (enrolled in at least seven classes per semester), will be determined after seven semesters. These students will be recognized at various functions at the end of the school year.

For the 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years, Mercer County High School will honor co-valedictorians and co-salutatorians (one student from each former school district for each honor).

SOCIETY FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

S.A.A. Scholarship Letters and Certificates or Seals are granted annually to full-time students in secondary schools, if they earn a GPA of 3.6 or better. These awards may be given at the end of the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th semesters. S.A.A. will award high school students a certificate, if they meet GPA requirements, in 9th grade. Each consecutive year students qualify, they will receive a Seal to place on the original certificate. As seniors, if students qualify all four years, they will be accepted into the Society for Membership. They will then receive an additional award and Seal to place on their high school diploma. The seniors, who earn a GPA of 3.8 or better, will have Cum Laude put on their award. See official criteria for more information.

CREDIT BY EXTENSION OR CORRESPONDENCE

Mercer County High School may accept earned credit by a student through extension study. Such credit shall be earned through courses offered by institutions approved by Mercer County School District. A maximum of four credits will be counted towards graduation. Approval for the third and fourth credits, or on exceptions, must come from the superintendent of schools.

1. Extension and correspondence courses must be approved by written agreement before the course begins and must be signed by the student, parent, counselor and principal. Correspondence courses are to be taken one at a time and are to be complete by April 1st.
2. Required courses offered at Mercer County High School cannot be taken by correspondence or extension unless the student has failed the course. Any required course taken via correspondence or extension must cover the same curricular concepts as the required course it is to replace at Mercer County High School.
3. The student must pay all costs.
4. Scheduling conflicts or other extenuating circumstances may be resolved by mutual consent of administration, counselor, parent and student.
5. Credits earned for college credit may not be used for credit towards graduation from high school unless a dual enrollment agreement exists between Mercer County School District and the institution of higher learning.

STUDENT LIFE

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM THE BUILDING

Once students are on school grounds their conduct is subject to faculty supervision and the rules and regulations of Mercer County High School. Loitering on private property near the school is not allowed.

If a student needs to be excused early from school, parent contact must be made, either by a note from home or a phone call. In each case the student must sign out in the office. Any time a student arrives to school during the school day, he/she must sign in and get a pass from the office before continuing on to class. If a student is at an appointment, he/she is to bring a note back from that office when he/she returns to school (ie: doctor, court, etc.). Students who are in the building after 3:40 p.m. are assumed to be attending school activities arranged and supervised by teachers. Anyone else will be discouraged from being in the building.

ELECTRONIC/ENTERTAINMENT DEVICES

Electronic devices, entertainment devices and/or other disruptive devices are not to be brought to school. This is to include, but not limited to, ipods, laser pointers, tape/disc players, boom boxes, hand-held video games or any item that may be seen as disruptive to the educational process or seen as a safety hazard.

Cell phones are not to be on or used during the school day, without approval of the building administrator, and cell phone use on school premises, at school functions and on buses is a privilege. Cell phones left in lockers should be turned off or set to silent mode. Teachers are to confiscate cell phones from students if they are out during the school day. Provided they have not had any prior discipline infractions for other

reasons, students will be issued a warning the first time their phone is taken, a detention will be issued the second time, and the third time a detention will be issued and the parent will have to make arrangements to pick up the phone. Students who refuse to turn over their cell phones to a faculty member will be assigned a Saturday detention and will be referred to the office.

COMPUTER NETWORK

The computer network may only be used for defined acceptable uses. The use of the computer network is not private and may be monitored by the district. The district uses Internet filters, blocking software, and other technology protection measures to prevent access to obscenity, child pornography, or material that would be harmful to minors.

CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying is defined as sending or posting cruel, vicious, and sometimes threatening messages on the Internet. The district considers cyber bullying a serious offense that may result in disciplinary action.

LIBRARY

The Library Media Center (LMC) opens on school days 15 minutes prior to the start of school and closes 15 minutes after school lets out in the afternoon. The Library is intended as a “quiet” study and research center.

Students and teachers wishing to take books and other materials outside the Library must check them out from a Library staff member or authorized student. If no one is at the check-out desk, ask for assistance. Taking library materials without checking them out is THEFT. Students guilty of an act of theft will be subject to disciplinary action.

Students are responsible for the timely return of all items. Fines will be assessed at the rate of five cents per day per item (school days only), with the exception of overnight check-outs. Overnight materials must be returned during the first class period of the next school day; fines on these items are twenty-five cents per day. Lost items must be replaced at the current cost of replacement.

AUTOMOBILES

Students who use cars for transportation to and from school are expected to comply with the regulations listed below. These regulations are reasonable and are for the protection of the entire student body.

1. There is to be no “hot rodding” near school.
2. Cars are to be parked in designated student parking areas and under no circumstances are to be double-parked or be driven during lunch without special permission of the principal. Any student violating this rule may not be allowed to drive his/her car on school grounds.
3. Students are not to go to the parking area or cars during the course of the school day unless special permission is granted.
4. Students are not to loiter in parked cars before or after school.

5. Students taking part in activities after school are not to move cars until the activity is over and they leave school.
6. Students are not to use cars for errands during school time unless given special permission by the principal.
7. Students are to register their car and receive a parking pass when they complete student registration forms at the beginning of the year. The pass should be displayed in the car when it is on school premises. This will help school staff in identifying the student driver if the car needs to be moved during the day.
8. The Board of Education reserves the right to revoke this policy or refuse the permission to drive to any student.

It is understood by parents, guardians and students that any person who causes a vehicle to be located, drives a vehicle or has control of a vehicle in a school parking lot, shall be deemed to have consented to a search of such vehicle. The search may be conducted for any reason and at any time by school officials or by law enforcement officials at the request of school officials. The entirety of the vehicle shall be subject to search, including but not limited to, the passenger compartment, the trunk or undercarriage of the vehicle and any containers located therein, whether locked or unlocked.

PASSES

Faculty and staff members will write passes for students to be out of the classrooms during class periods. Students are not to be out of classrooms without permission from a staff person, and these should be written on a very limited basis.

CLOTHING, ACCESSORY AND GROOMING REGULATIONS

Students must be made aware that standards of dress vary according to the appropriateness of time and place. It is the school's position that an educational setting requires standards that combine comfort with observance of community standards and societal norms.

Students are not to wear/carry items that are substantively disruptive, obscene, have suggestive sexual meanings (ie: Playboy), or are materially damaging to school property. Students are not to wear clothes that advertise drugs, alcohol, or tobacco; or clothes where brand names of such products appear as a part of a background or scene depicted in any form. If hooded sweatshirts are worn, students are not to wear the hood at school.

Guidelines for dress during warm weather will be relaxed yet limited.

Girls are not to wear tube tops, midriffs, halter-tops, or tops with spaghetti straps unless a blouse or other cover is also worn. Neither gender is to wear tops or shirts with pants that expose the midriff. Such clothing must meet at the waist line. Neither gender is allowed to wear tank tops that have straps less than two inches wide and/or sagging armholes. Shoes or sandals are required. Shorts are acceptable. Shorts must be long enough that the bottom hem of the shorts leg meets the

fingertips of the students' arms when they hold them straight down when standing. Pants are to be worn at the waistline. Pajama style pants are not to be worn by either gender. Pants with writing on the seat are not allowed.

Coats, hats, bandanas and/or sunglasses are not to be worn in the building. Chains, strings, ropes, or other hanging items from belt or wallet are a safety hazard and are not to be worn. House slippers, wheeled shoes (Heelies) or the like may not be worn due to health and safety reasons.

Violation of the dress code will result in the student being asked to change, cover, or reverse the article of clothing. The student will be reminded not to wear that article of clothing to school in the future. Any student refusing to abide by a faculty member's request will be subject to disciplinary action. An objectionable article of clothing can be deemed as a form of sexual harassment subject to disciplinary action under the policy dealing with such behavior.

DRUG FREE ZONE

Mercer County School District #404 has been designated a Drug Free School Zone. This means that any drug or look-a-like drug, alcohol, or tobacco violation on school property and/or at any school function (on campus or off) can result in disciplinary action by school officials.

GAMBLING

No form of gambling is permitted in the building, on the school grounds, or on field trips.

HEALTH EXAMINATIONS

Health examinations are to be taken by all students participating in athletics. All entering freshmen are required by law to present evidence of physical examination and immunizations.

TELEPHONE USE

A telephone is available in the office for students who need to make phone calls in case of illness, emergency, or school business. Permission to use the phone must be given by the principal or the secretaries. Students are not to use cell phones at school during the school day. (Refer to the 'Electronic/Entertainment Devices' section for a more detailed explanation.)

STUDENT VISITORS

Administration and staff discourage having student visitors at school. Permission will be granted only in special cases. Visitors should have a stated educational purpose, and no visitors will be allowed in the building without prior approval.

STUDENT LUNCH PERIODS

During the lunch periods students may lounge in the cafeteria, lobby area, or outdoors. Cafeteria food may be consumed in the cafeteria or outdoors. Vending machine drinks may be consumed in the cafeteria, lobby area or outdoors as long as empty containers are thrown away. Students are not to possess or consume food or beverages at school that

are in violation of the district wellness policy (ie: pop, energy drinks, fast food, etc.) Students are not allowed to go out of designated areas or drive their cars during lunch periods unless given special permission by the principal.

SNOWBALLS

The throwing of snowballs is prohibited.

“HANDS OFF” POLICY

A public display of affection is offensive to those around the affectionate couple. Thus, students are to keep “Hands-Off.”

INITIATION

Initiation activity is not allowed and known instances will result in disciplinary action.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

All students at Mercer County High School are responsible for their actions and are governed by the Student Conduct and Discipline Code. To succeed, discipline must ultimately be self-discipline. Where a student is not capable of exercising appropriate self-discipline, the school will impose sanctions. Teachers and administrators have a legal and moral mandate to ensure an orderly educational climate in the school. We think the student body and this community take this mandate seriously, and that they deserve to have a school experience uninterrupted by disorder or disrespect. Along with personal rights, each student also has the obligation and responsibility to respect these as the rights of all students. Any students violating the rights of others will be held responsible and appropriately disciplined (including forfeiture of their attendance rights) at the direction of the Board of Education.

In school there are numerous opportunities for disagreement between people to arise. When such occasions occur there must be someone who has the responsibility for settling the disagreements in order to avoid complete disorder in the school. Such a structure is necessary to facilitate the teaching-learning process.

The power and the responsibility for the settlement of disagreements has been given to the Mercer County School District #404 Board of Education, and through them, to the principals and teachers. Generally, teachers are accorded full responsibility for discipline within their classrooms. They are also expected to assist with student control in activities. Teachers have the right to temporarily remove a student from their classroom for discipline measures.

In addition, the school district reserves the right to discipline students for school-related behavior that takes place off school campus during school hours and non-school hours.

Discipline is administered through a four-level system.

Level One:

- a. Notification/Conference with parents
- b. Rule clarification to student
- c. Reprimand and warning to student
- d. Possibility of classroom detention or Saturday detention being assigned.

Level Two:

- a. Notification/Conference with parents
- b. Rule clarification to student
- c. Reprimand and warning to student
- d. A one to three day suspension or possible Saturday detention(s)

Level Three

- a. Notification/Conference with parents
- b. Rule clarification to student
- c. Reprimand and warning to student
- d. A four to ten day suspension

Level Four

- a. Notification/Conference with parents
- b. Rule clarification to student
- c. Reprimand and warning to student
- d. A four to ten day suspension
- e. Student may be recommended for expulsion

Examples of gross disobedience and misconduct that the levels cover are listed below.

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|---|---------------|
| 1. Absenteeism and Truancy | Level 1-4 |
| 2. Academic misconduct- cheating, plagiarism/copying a test or assignment/using another's assignment | Level 1-2-3-4 |
| 3. Aggressive Behavior | Level 1-4 |
| 4. Arson | Level 4 |
| 5. Assault or threat of staff member | Level 4 |
| 6. Assault or threat of student | Level 2-3-4 |
| 7. Bomb Threat | Level 3-4 |
| 8. Bullying/Cyber-Bullying | Level 1-4 |
| 9. Conduct/Dress which violates/infringes upon the rights and/or safety of others or constitutes an interference with school purposes, the educational setting or any school function | Level 1-2-3-4 |
| 10. Co-Curricular and Athletic Code Violations | Level 1-4 |
| 11. Defiance of faculty authority | Level 2-3-4 |

12. Disrespect for faculty	Level 1-2-3-4
13. Dress Code Violations	Level 1-4
14. False fire alarm	Level 2-3-4
15. Firearm/Weapon possession	Level 2-4
16. Gang related activities	Level 1-2-3-4
17. Improper use of fire extinguisher	Level 1-2-3-4
18. Inappropriate bus behavior	Level 1-2-3-4
19. Obscene language or gestures, written or spoken	Level 1-2-3-4
20. Possession of electronic devices that could cause classroom disruption (to include, but not limited to--pagers, cellular phones, ipods, CD players, laser pointers, video games, etc.)	Level 1-2-3-4
21. Presence in off-limits areas	Level 2-3-4
22. Reckless endangerment-endangering one's self or someone else	Level 2-3-4
23. Referral from classroom, study hall, etc., for discipline	Level 1-2-3-4
24. Repeated minor violations	Level 1-2-3-4
25. Sexual harassment	Level 1-2-3-4
26. Theft	Level 1-2-3-4
27. Tobacco use or possession	Level 2-3-4
28. Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing or selling alcohol, drugs, controlled substances, look-a-like drugs or paraphernalia	Level 3-4
29. Vandalism, defacing school property	Level 1-2-3-4
30. Violation of computer network security or computer use rules	Level 1-2-3-4

The list of violations is not all-inclusive; other infractions are to be handled at the discretion of the principal. School officials may change the severity or level of offense at their discretion without prior notification. Student attitude and intent, severity of the infraction, and frequency of occurrence are all to be considered in determining level of discipline. All school discipline policies are in force at all school events, whether held on Mercer County High School grounds or elsewhere.

DETENTION POLICY

Students issued detentions may be required to serve the detentions with the issuing teacher. Detention time will be arranged between the teacher and the student. Students may also be assigned to serve detentions through the office on Tuesday and/or Wednesday afternoons. These are an hour long, beginning immediately after the bell rings to let school out.

The detention supervisor will see that students on detention are completing work. Failure to serve detention will result in a suspension or a Saturday detention. Teachers will complete a referral for each detention issued.

Office detentions may be assigned up to four times (for various types of infractions) per semester to correct inappropriate behavior. If a student exceeds this number, more severe consequences will result, to include but not limited to Saturday detentions and/or suspensions.

SHOP CLASS (THREE STRIKES) POLICY

Any student in a vocational building class may be removed from class for the remainder of the year after being sent to the office three times earning three detentions for shop rule violations. This does not include detentions due to tardies. Such violations would include safety rule violations, disruptive behavior in the shop, or anything that may interfere with safety in the shop.

A few severe violations may result in the immediate removal from the shop. These would include intentional and severe infractions of safety rules, theft of shop equipment, and intentional damage to shop equipment. In addition, if a student is removed from a shop class for discipline reasons, it is at the discretion of the administrator what grade the student will receive and where the student is placed for that period. These rules are to ensure the safety of the student and all others in the shop.

SUSPENSION

The student who is guilty of gross disobedience or misconduct is subject to suspension from classes by the following process:

1. Notice will be given that suspension may occur with the reasons for the suspension;
2. The student may respond to the charges; and
3. A judgment will be rendered regarding the suspension.

Parents will be notified of the suspension. They will be given a written statement of the reasons for the suspension and the beginning and ending dates of the suspension. They will also be advised of a right to a hearing with the superintendent of schools.

No suspension will be greater than ten days. A third suspension will likely lead to a recommendation for expulsion. During the suspension the student may be retained at school (In-school Suspension).

Students who receive out-of-school suspensions will receive a one half percentage point deduction off their accumulative grading period percentage score per day the student is suspended. (For instance, if John Doe is suspended three days during a quarter, and he has a 92% as a final percentage for a particular class, his final percentage in that class for that

grading period will be an 90.5% (1/2 percentage point reduction per day of OSS)).

Any student who serves out-of-school suspension during the year will not be allowed to attend the next school-sponsored dance during that school year (ie: Homecoming, Winter Formal, Prom).

Any student whose presence poses an immediate threat to the school may be immediately removed, with notice and hearing to be provided as soon as practical.

The student who would appeal the decision of the principal may receive a hearing with the superintendent of schools. If he is still dissatisfied, he may meet with the Board of Education. Board policy on suspensions, including timeline, would be provided to those who initiate an appeals process, or upon request. If the suspension decision is reversed at any point, all references in the student's records would be removed and whatever assistance the student needs for completing missed schoolwork will be provided.

EXPULSION

A recommendation for expulsion may occur as a result of a third suspension in the academic year or for gross disobedience or misconduct showing a clear and flagrant disregard for the educational process. The student may be temporarily suspended from school pending a hearing before the Board of Education to determine the outcome of the case.

Board of Education Policy will govern the procedure, and a copy of the Policy will be made available to the student at the time he is advised a recommendation for expulsion is to be made.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT/DISCIPLINE

Corporal Punishment is not permitted. No slapping, paddling or prolonged maintenance of students in physical painful positions or intentional infliction of bodily harm is acceptable. A staff member may, however, use reasonable physical force against a pupil without advance notice to the principal when it is essential for self-defense, the preservation of order, or for the protection of other persons or the property of the Board.

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS – DISCIPLINE

The Mercer County School District #404 has adopted a policy concerning discipline and special education students. The policy is in compliance with federal and state guidelines. The policy explains the rules and procedures that will be followed when disciplining special education students. Parents of special education students are to receive a copy of the policy within fifteen days after the start of school.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

School authorities may inspect and search school property and equipment owned or controlled by the school (such as lockers, desks, and parking lots), as well as personal effects left there by a student, without notice to or the consent of the student. Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy in these places or areas or in their personal effects left there.

The Administration may request the assistance of the law enforcement officials to conduct inspections and searches of lockers, desks, parking lots, and other school property and equipment for illegal drugs, weapons, or other illegal or dangerous substances or materials, including searches conducted by the use of specially trained dogs.

School authorities may search a student and/or the student's personal effects in the student's possession (such as purses, wallets, knapsacks, book bags, lunch boxes, etc.) when there is a reasonable ground for suspecting that the search will produce evidence the particular student has violated or is violating either the law or the District's student conduct rules. The search itself must be conducted in a manner which is reasonable, related to its objectives, and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

When feasible, the search should be conducted as follows:

- as privately as possible (out of student view);
- in the presence of a school administrator or adult witness;
- by a certified employee or liaison police officer (who is the same gender as the student).

If a search produces evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or the District's policies or rules, such evidence may be seized and impounded by school authorities, and disciplinary action may be taken. When appropriate, such evidence may be transferred to law enforcement authorities.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular and punctual patterns of attendance will be expected of each student enrolled in Mercer County High School. The secondary student is of an age when he/she needs to learn the valuable concepts of attendance and punctuality. The lesson is important for maturation and acceptance of the responsibility for his/her actions. Good high school attendance helps to prepare the teenager for attendance requirements in adulthood.

Students should strive to maintain a good attendance record. Frequent absences of students from regular classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the instructional process. The school cannot teach students who are not present. The entire process of education requires a

regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences and study in order to reach the goal on maximum educational benefits for each individual student. The regular contact of the students with one another in the classroom and their participation in well-planned instructional activities under the supervision of a teacher are vital to this purpose.

The attendance policy exists with only the intent to help students and to maintain the rationale for which it exists. It is recognized that absence from school may be necessary under certain circumstances. However, every effort should be made by students, parents/guardians, teachers and administrators to keep absences and tardiness to a minimum.

The principal, assistant, or guidance counselor will verify if absences are excused or unexcused. Absences may be unexcused even though parents have given approval. An excused absence is one that is unavoidable – illness of the student, serious illness or death in the family, certain family trips, essential work at home, doctor appointments, or other causes considered unavoidable by the principal. If a student is unable to attend school because of illness, the parent is encouraged to obtain a note from the attending physician to verify the illness (On final exam days, a physician's note must be brought to the office for an absence to be excused). In addition, any time a student goes to an appointment during school hours, he/she is to bring a note (from that office) into the high school office when he/she returns to school.

If a student has a total in excess of 5 excused absences in one semester, the school may require parents or guardians to present medical documentation of physical or emotional conditions causing a student's absence. Varsity athletes will be excused to attend state tournament of the sport in which they participate. Parents are urged to clear an absence in advance if there is any question of its being excused. A pre-arranged absence form is available for arranging an excused absence. All work may be made up with full teacher assistance and credit.

The parent or legal guardian of the student should notify the school office (582-2223) between 7:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. each day of a student's absence. If the school does not receive a phone call a parent contact will be made to verify the student's absence and determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. If a phone contact cannot be made the parent is expected to send a note with the student when he/she returns to school explaining the reason for the student's absence. If the note from home is not received when the student returns to school, the absence will be considered unexcused. Unexcused absences are monitored very carefully. Excessive unexcused absences will be labeled truancy and will be reported to the truancy authorities as well.

An unexcused absence is one not having school approval. Excessive absences for excused reasons may be labeled unexcused. Unexcused absences will mean a loss of credit during the time missed, in addition to receiving disciplinary consequences.

To discourage unexcused absences at Mercer County High School, the following procedure will be followed.

1. Any student who accumulates five (5) unexcused absences in any course for any grading period (quarter) will receive a failing grade for the course in that grading period.
2. At the end of the grading period, the student who failed a course from unexcused absences may appeal in writing to the principal if he feels that there was an error in his attendance, or if circumstances beyond his control caused the unexcused absence.
3. A hearing will be conducted as soon as possible, following the receipt of the appeal. An appeals board consisting of the principal, the superintendent and a board member will review the appeal and return a ruling.

A school wide tardy policy is in effect. A student will be considered tardy until 8:30 a.m., after which the tardy will become an unexcused absence. Each student is allowed to be tardy two times in a semester. When a student is tardy the third time, a detention is issued. The fourth time a student is tardy a one-hour detention and an unexcused absence penalty is issued. With each successive occurrence a regular or Saturday detention will be assigned, in addition to the student being assigned an unexcused absence for that class hour. Individual classroom teachers will handle tardiness to classes throughout the school day. They may also assign detentions to be served.

The first time a student arrives at school during 1st hour, after 8:30am, a warning is issued. Subsequent times a student arrives at school during 1st hour, after 8:30am, an unexcused absence and a detention is assigned. Exceptions to this policy will be made by the administrator on an individual basis, and the circumstances surrounding the late arrival will be considered. Acceptable reasons for arriving later than 8:30 are ones such as medical appointments, family emergencies, or vehicle accidents. Any such circumstances must be verified by a phone call or note from a physician or guardian.

Students who arrive at school any time after the school day has started or leave before the end of the school day must sign in/out in the office. To leave the building, a student must have a note from a parent and/or a phone call to verify the need to leave. Any student who is ill will not be

released unless a parent, guardian, or acceptable adult is notified and gives permission for the student to leave.

The district discourages parents or guardians from taking vacations during periods when school is in session. Such vacations may disrupt the continuity of a student's learning and create educational problems. The School will offer no guarantee that written assignments covering such vacation periods will be provided.

Participation in Aledo High School events, practices, contests, or games will be allowed only if the student is in class by the end of first period. Exceptions and permission are subject to approval by the principal.

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION FROM PREVIOUS DISTRICT

An enrolling student shall not be permitted to attend class in the Mercer County School District until the student has served the entire period of the suspension or expulsion imposed by the school from which the student is transferring. The school board may approve the placement of the student in an alternative school program if available for the remainder of the suspension or expulsion.

ACTIVITY PROGRAM **STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

The student government is the executive council of the student body. It holds regular meetings for the transaction of business and conduct of student affairs. It is made up of elected student body officers and representatives of classes. There is a code of conduct for each elected representative. An administrative team will conduct a preliminary investigation of any reported violations, to include but not limited to drug or alcohol use.

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

The Mercer County High School National Honor Society is working to bring achievement of outstanding high school students to the attention of their classmates, their parents, and their community.

The National Honor Society will assist to:

Create an enthusiasm for scholarship	Promote leadership
Stimulate a desire to render service	Develop character

A copy of the Constitution for the Mercer County High School Chapter is on file in the high school office. The procedure used in selecting and electing members to the local chapter may be found in this packet.

Each student to be considered must have been in attendance at Mercer County High School at least one semester.

All records of the selecting results will be kept in the office of the advisor and are confidential. (Interested persons may contact the principal for further information if so desired.)

The process that will be used in determining the final membership in the National Honor Society will include the following steps:

- A. A committee of a minimum of five faculty members will be appointed by the principal.
- B. The principal will provide the committee with a list of students who have met the minimum requirements for scholarship.

Senior -- 3.33 cumulative Grade Point Average

Junior -- 3.33 cumulative Grade Point Average

Scholastic eligibility will be determined on the guidelines in Appendix A (attached)

- C. A student is not eligible to apply for membership if one of the following guidelines has been broken:
 - 1. An out-of-school suspension or if the student has been suspended from a school-sponsored activity for disciplinary reasons during the last twelve calendar months.
 - 2. Conviction of a criminal offense during the last twelve months.
- D. Juniors and Seniors only will be eligible to apply for membership.
- E. The list of students will be posted by the office for those who meet the minimum requirements. Any student whose name is not on the list and feels that he or she has met the minimum requirements is encouraged to submit his or her name to the principal in writing.
- F. The committee will review the application for meeting the minimum requirements for leadership and service.
 - 1. Leadership -
The student must have held one elected office or community leadership role. The student must have belonged to two or more school clubs or organizations.
 - 2. Service -
The student must have been involved in three or more service activities. (Contributing to the positive function of school classmates and the community)

DANCES

The school chooses to observe a formal dress code. Some general guidelines are as follows:

- A. No baseball-type caps or western hats
- B. No tennis shoes
- C. No shorts or short type tuxedos

These types of apparel would be appropriate:

- A. Formal attire which would include sweater and tie, or sport coat as well as tuxedo for boys.

B. Party dresses as well as formal gowns for girls
Dances are considered school functions that are either held on campus or off campus. It is expected that each student would abide by the same high school guidelines/rules that are stated in the handbook.

The following rules apply to school dances:

- A. Out of school dates who are invited to Mercer County High School dances must be registered in the high school office the Wednesday prior to the dance by the student escorting them. Dances are high school functions and it is expected that only students of high school age be in attendance. A "Dance Verification Form" must be completed and brought to the dance in order for guests outside Mercer County High School to attend.
- B. The "leave – no return" policy. This means if students leave the dance before it is over, then they may not return to the dance.

SERVICES **HEALTH/INJURY**

Students who become ill or injured at school should report to a school official. First aid may be administered where appropriate, or arrangements made for further treatment. In the event a parent/guardian cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be notified. No one will be sent home unattended.

The school assumes no responsibility for medical treatment of students. The school will provide report forms to assure an accurate collection of information regarding injuries.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

The administration of medication to a child is primarily the responsibility of the child's parents. The administration of medication during regular school hours and during school related activities is discouraged unless absolutely necessary for the critical health and well being of the student.

If appropriate personnel are available, non-prescription medication may be given to students only upon written request of the parents. Prescription medication will be given only on the written prescription of a licensed physician and a written request of the parents if appropriate personnel are available.

The law now allows students with asthma to carry their inhalers and self-medicate. The law also allows students who use an epinephrine auto-injector (a.k.a. EpiPen) for allergies to possess this medication throughout the school day and self medicate as necessary. The school shall not be liable for self-administration of medication, except in cases

of willful and wanton misconduct by school officials. Families wanting students to possess and use inhalers and EpiPens must obtain written parental consent, doctor consent and prescription information must be provided to the school and these things must be obtained each year.

FREE/REDUCED LUNCH

Free or reduced cost meals are provided to those students whose parents or guardians meet certain income criteria. Application forms are available in the office, and this information is kept confidential.

INSURANCE

Student Accident Coverage (school time only) will be provided for the 2009-2010 school year. A brochure describing this coverage is provided at registration. Please retain the brochure as a description of coverage.

TRANSPORTATION

School bus transportation is provided to those students living one and one half miles or more from a school building. Courteous behavior is the standard while riding on a school bus, the same as in a classroom. Misbehavior will be reported to the bus contractor, and in turn to the building principal and superintendent. Riding the bus is a privilege, not a right. Misbehavior could result in suspension from riding the bus.

By signing off that you have received and read this handbook, you have given the school district the right to audiotape and/or videotape your child for safety purposes while he/she is riding the bus. These tapes may be viewed by school administration and may be used to address safety/discipline issues.

LOCKERS, LOCKS

Students are assigned lockers for safeguarding personal items. Incoming freshmen are assigned a locker and will maintain that locker for the entire time they are enrolled at Mercer County High School. A one-time ten-dollar fee is assessed to incoming students. The ten-dollar fee will be returned to the student when they leave Mercer County High School if the lock and locker are intact and in working condition. Lockers are the property of the school district and are loaned to you for storing your materials. They may be inspected for damage or other reasons without prior notice to the students. The number of your locker is written on your student schedule. You will be responsible for its care.

1. Do not scratch on, write on, or "jam" your locker.
2. Avoid using stickers or taping on pictures.
3. Do not decorate the outside of your locker. Alcohol, drug, tobacco, or other inappropriate posters or items are not to be displayed on or in lockers.
4. Be sure you are in the locker to which you are assigned. Changes must have office approval. Students are not to share lockers.
5. Everyone is assigned a locker with combination locks that are in working order. If you wish to have your

lock repaired, replaced, or the combination changed, contact the office for the custodians assistance.

Students who remove the lock or throw them away will be charged for the replacement lock.

6. Notify the office immediately of damage done by others to your locker. All lockers have been inspected with a record made as to their condition. It is expected that they will be in the same state of repair at the end of the school year. Your responsibility for the upkeep of your locker may include cleaning, repair, or replacement of missing parts. Please help all of us by treating the property as if it were your own.

COLLEGE DAYS

Seniors and second semester juniors will be excused a total of three days to prepare for postgraduate plans – finding a job or choosing a college. Juniors will be allowed one day and seniors will be allowed two days. Any classroom work that will be missed must be completed in advance. A college/job visitation form must be picked up in the guidance office prior to the day that the student will be absent. For absences to be excused students must return page one completed to the main office one day prior to the absence and page two must be completed and returned the first day of school after the student visits the college. The most important thing for you to note is that a parent must accompany the student and the visit must be completed by the first Friday in April of the school year. Exceptions will be made for students who must take placement tests, register, complete scholarship interviews or attend an audition.

D/F POLICY

1. A D/F list from all teachers will come out once a week. This will be a weekly grade report, which will be cumulative.
2. If a student is on the D/F list for two (2) consecutive weeks, he or she will be considered at-risk.
3. Students will be informed if they are on the D/F list by either their teacher or the at-risk coordinator.
4. Parents will be notified of their student's at-risk status twice a month.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

All students who have been involved with substance abuse will be provided information regarding treatment options upon request or upon receipt of information by Mercer County High School indicating a possible student need.

MERCER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL EXTRA-CURRICULAR CODE OF CONDUCT

Extra-curricular Mission Statement:

Mercer County School District is committed to excellence in both academics and extra-curricular activities. Our philosophy is that these two go hand in hand. Academics are our top priority, and we feel we prepare our students to be successful in any endeavor they choose. Extra-curricular activities are part of that preparation. It is the coaches and teachers responsibility to teach teamwork, work ethic, sportsmanship, leadership, communication, and countless other attributes.

All students are encouraged to be involved in extra-curricular activities at our schools. The schools offer many opportunities for the students to expand themselves and their knowledge. Being part of a Mercer County High School athletic team will help to develop pride, self-satisfaction, good sportsmanship and the enthusiasm that comes with being part of a great team. In addition to following the general code for Student Conduct and Discipline, students who participate in athletics or other extra-curricular activities are also bound by the Mercer County High School Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct. Participants are bound by this Code at all times, both in and out of school and at all times, whether or not during the school year.

Coaches and sponsors have the right to issue and enforce additional reasonable rules and regulations governing their specific activity.

Mercer County School District 404 Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct:

Any participant in extra-curricular activities at Mercer County School District 404 who receives any combination of behavioral referrals, suspensions, or unexcused absences, totaling 3 per semester will affect privileges of participation.

Participation in extra-curricular activities at Mercer County High School is a privilege extended to the student body by the Board of Education. Students are encouraged to participate enthusiastically as team members and as fans.

Many members of our community, as well as members of surrounding communities, gauge the quality of our school by what they experience through our athletic department, fans, coaches and participants of extra-curricular activities. The image and reputation of Mercer County School District is largely formed by the actions and attitudes displayed by our students and coaches at these events. This applies not only to the playing field and court, but also in the locker rooms, hallways, and concession areas before, during, and after the events.

You need to be aware that you (coaches, participants, and fans) are ambassadors of the Mercer County School District and community. You radiate the spirit and build the image and reputation of the school and

community by your actions and attitudes. We have built, and will continue to build a very positive image and enthusiastic spirit, one of which we can all be proud.

Sportsmanship:

All students and spectators are expected to evidence good sportsmanship at all extra-curricular school activities. Such sportsmanship is evidenced by the following:

Consider the visiting team and fans, as well as the officials, as guests and treat them as such.

1. Respect the rights of all spectators.
2. Accept the officials' decisions as final.
3. Support your team with positive enthusiasm.
4. Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
5. Consider it a privilege and duty to encourage everyone to live up to the spirit of the rules of fair play and sportsmanship.

Students and fans shall refrain from the following conduct at all extra-curricular activities:

1. Booing or jeering officials or players at any time.
2. Applauding errors by opponents or penalties inflicted upon them.
3. Yelling for or demanding a substitution or withdrawal of a player.
4. Using profane or otherwise inappropriate language at any time during the event.
5. Throwing objects on the field or playing court.
6. Criticize players or coaches for losing a game.

The administration reserves the right to remove anyone from a school event for actions that are not seen as setting a good example for our student body. **Any parent, student, or spectator can lose their right to attend any Mercer County School District extra-curricular event pursuant to Section 24-24 of the School Code for violation of the above rules of conduct.**

Athletic and Extra-Curricular Activities

Scholastic Bowl	Band
Flag Squad	Jazz Band
Chorus	Generations
Cheerleading	Football
Volleyball	Girl's Basketball
Boy's Basketball	Wrestling
Boy's Track	Girl's Track
Boy's Golf	Girl's Golf

Baseball
Pom Pon
Student Government
National Honor Society

Softball
Cross Country
Speech

Athletic Awards

1. Numerals will be issued at the 9th grade level. Numerals may be earned at the 10th grade level, if the student was not a participant in 9th grade.
2. A minor letter will be issued at the 10th grade level.
3. Any participant on the Varsity level who earns a letter and has not previously been issued numerals and/or a minor letter will be issued these.
4. A major letter is presented the first time an athlete meets the criteria to earn a major letter in a sport. One major letter is given per sport during an athlete's high school career. The second, third and fourth time an athlete receives a letter in the same sport, the athlete will receive additional pins.

Student/Athlete Responsibilities

Responsibilities to yourself:

You owe it to yourself to get the greatest possible good from your school experiences. Your studies, your participation in activities and sports will prepare you for life. All students should strive to do their best in whatever they choose to do. Physical and mental preparation is a must for any activity.

Responsibilities to your school:

Mercer County School District is able to maintain an outstanding sports program and extracurricular program only if every athlete and participant gives the best of their ability. Your team depends on YOUR effort. You as a participant in an extra-curricular activity assume a degree of leadership. You are on stage with the spotlight on at all times. People often judge our total school system by the conduct and attitude of the athletes, both on and off the field. Make your community proud of you and the community proud of its schools, by your faithful exemplification of these ideals.

Responsibilities to others:

When you know you have lived up to the teams training rules, have practiced to the best of your ability everyday, and have played the game "all out" you can maintain self respect and be proud of your accomplishment no matter what the scoreboard reads. Younger students in the school district are watching you. You are leaving a legacy that will be copied by incoming classes for years to come. Set good examples for them to follow.

Requirements for Participation:

1. Physical Exam Form completed and on file with Athletic Director (good for 1 year from date of exam).
2. Insurance or insurance waiver.

3. Meets all eligibility requirements set forth in this document and by IHSA.
4. Signed Extra-curricular Code of Conduct.
5. **ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR PARTICIPATION-** Participation in Mercer County High School events, practices, contests, or games will be allowed only if student is in class before the end of 1st period.

Parent Responsibilities:

The parents are a valuable resource for the Mercer County School District. The school district asks that parents support the rules set forth in the "Code of Conduct". If they have a problem with the coach or a rules infraction, they should follow the steps set forth below.

1. Call to set up an appointment with the coach or sponsor. If the parent has a problem or concern with a coach or sponsor or a program he or she should NOT approach the coach after a game or practice.
2. Discuss the problem or concern with the coach or sponsor.
3. If the problem is not resolved, the parent may go to the athletic director. It is always suggested that the parent go to the coach first, but if the parent feels uncomfortable with that, he/she may go directly to the athletic director. If the issue is not resolved, the parent may report to the principal.
4. If the problem is not resolved the parent has the right to appeal any decision. This procedure is covered in this guide.

**Conduct of a participant at a Mercer County School District
Extra-curricular Event:**

The conduct of an athlete is closely observed in all areas of life. It's important that your behavior be above reproach in all of the following areas:

On the field or during the event:

A participant does not use profanity or illegal tactics. He or she learns fast that losing is a part of the game. You should be gracious in defeat and modest in victory. Congratulate your opponent after every event, whether in defeat or victory. We are as proud of our reputation in sportsmanship as we are in our championships.

In the classroom:

A good athlete is a good student. We all have different abilities, but our effort is based on determination and work ethic. If you are lazy in class, you will be lazy in practice and never reach your full potential. You must adjust and plan your schedule to give sufficient time and energy to your studies to insure good grades.

Show fellow students and faculty the proper respect. Be courteous at all times. Horseplay and unnecessary boisterousness are not approved

habits of behavior in practice or the classroom. An undisciplined student is usually an undisciplined athlete.

Academic Eligibility

Mercer County School District extra-curricular participants must meet the IHSA academic requirement of passing 20 credit hours of academic coursework per week to remain eligible. Eligibility lists are distributed to all faculties. If a student is declared academic ineligible on Thursday, he or she will not participate in any contest that following week. The eligibility requirements for the school are listed below.

The head coach should clarify eligibility rules with athletes.

1. Must be scholastically eligible.
2. Must have a physical examination.
3. Must be within age limits defined by the IHSA.

It is the coach's responsibility to help students maintain their eligibility. Frequently, a coach will receive notice that an athlete is failing a class; the coach must follow up on this. Grades will be checked weekly on Thursday.

Teachers will list athletes with a D average and those failing a course.

If a student receives the first failing grade during a particular season – the student will receive one week probation and the student may practice and participate in contests.

If a student receives second failing grade during a particular activity – the student may practice, but may not participate in contests. The student is expected to dress in appropriate clothing and sit on the bench during the contest.

If a student receives a third failing grade during a particular activity – the student may practice, but may not participate in contests. The student is not allowed to attend any extra-curricular contests.

If a student receives a fourth failing grade- the student may continue to practice, but forfeits all the opportunities to dress or participate in contests for the remainder of the sport season.

If a student drops a course after the fifth day of a semester (even if he/she is passing), a failing grade will be recorded on the next Weekly Grade Report.

Future weekly checks will not note that failure.

A passing grade would be determined by using an average, that is, a total of all tests, assignments, and other scores. A failing grade should never be based on the week's work only.

All extra-curricular activities that require regular after school practices would be included on a weekly eligibility check.

A committee may review any student receiving special education services whose athletic eligibility is in question and still meets IHSA eligibility requirements. The committee includes the special education teacher, athletic director, instructor, and building principal for final eligibility determination.

OFFENSES:

The following behavior shall constitute "offenses" which shall subject the offending student to the applicable consequences listed below. In addition, gross disobedience or misconduct as defined in the Student Conduct and Discipline Code may result in exclusion from extra-curricular activities for such period of time as determined appropriate by the administration. Gross disobedience or misconduct may result in suspension or expulsion from school as defined by Board Policy and the Student Conduct and Discipline Code:

1. The use, possession, sale or distribution of tobacco, drugs, steroids or any controlled substance, or a beverage containing alcohol. Note: It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally prescribed medication specifically prescribed for the student by his/her doctor, except as prohibited by IHSA rules.
2. Behavior that constitutes gross disobedience or misconduct under the Student Conduct and Discipline Code.
3. Commission of conduct that constitutes a criminal act, with the exception of minor traffic offenses.

GUIDELINES FOR CONSEQUENCES

DRUG, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO VIOLATIONS

Participants in extra-curricular activities must conduct themselves at home and on school trips in such a manner that they are a credit to themselves, the team, the school, and the community. Extra-curricular participants who, during the year, do any of the following shall be subject to discipline.

Tobacco:

No possession, use or transfer of tobacco (including chewing tobacco) all year in and out of the season is permitted.

Alcohol:

No possession, use or transfer of alcoholic beverages all year in and out of season is permitted.

Illegal Drugs and Controlled Substances:

No possession, use or transfer of illegal drugs, controlled substances or look-alike drugs all year in and out of season is permitted.

Once an infraction is determined, the athlete and his/her parent(s) will be notified of the following options.

FIRST VIOLATION (Drugs, Alcohol or Tobacco)

1. Consume, possess or sell alcohol, drugs or tobacco. A suspension of one-third of the scheduled contests of that season (this may carry over to the following season within a school year or the following school year if less than a third of the season remains). Make an appointment with the Rock Island County Council on Addictions for Drugs or Alcohol for an assessment by a certified addiction counsel or the Mercer County Health Department for tobacco for a self study. If the athlete rejects the first option, he/she will be removed from all athletics for one calendar year.
2. Attendance at a party or riding in a vehicle where alcoholic beverages and/or controlled substances are being openly consumed by someone other than a parent or guardian. A suspension of ten percent (one football game) of the scheduled contests of that sport season. This may carry over to the following sport season within a school year, if there are less than ten percent of the scheduled contests remaining in the existing sport season.
3. The student will be required to practice with the group, regardless of the violation (unless suspended or expelled from school)

SECOND VIOLATION (Drugs, Alcohol or Tobacco)

1. Consume, possess or sell alcohol, drugs or tobacco. A suspension of one-half of the scheduled contests of that season (this may carry over to the following season within a school year or the following school year if less than a half of the season exists). Make an appointment with the Rock Island County Council on Addictions for Drugs or Alcohol for an assessment by a certified addiction counsel or the Mercer County Health Department for tobacco for an advanced self study. If the athlete rejects the first option, he/she will be removed from all athletics for one calendar year.
2. Attendance at a party or riding in a vehicle where alcoholic beverages and/or controlled substances are being openly consumed by someone other than a parent or guardian. A

suspension of one-third of the scheduled contests of that sport season. This may carry over to the following sport season within a school year, if there are less than one third of the scheduled contests remaining in the existing sport season.

3. The student will be required to practice with the group, regardless of the violation (unless suspended or expelled from school).

THIRD VIOLATION (Drugs, Alcohol or Tobacco)

1. Consume, possess or sell alcohol, drugs or tobacco. The athlete will be suspended from participation in all athletics while enrolled at Mercer County High School.

2. Attendance at a party or riding in a vehicle where alcoholic beverages and/or controlled substances are being consumed by someone other than a parent or guardian. The student will be suspended for one calendar year from the date of the violation.

Criminal Acts:

Students involved in the commission of a criminal act are in violation of this code of conduct. The administration and/or Board may impose disciplinary action for criminal acts committed.

Using information gained from witnesses, school officials and law enforcement agencies, the district may conduct its own investigation into criminal allegations and may determine a disciplinary course of action.

Because of time limitations, the school district will sometimes take disciplinary action before the courts determine the students' guilt.

The administration and/or Board also reserve the right to change the duration of the suspensions upon their discretion without prior notice to the students.

First Violation-Suspension from one-third (1/3) of scheduled contests for current or upcoming season with unfulfilled fraction to carry over to the next sport or activity season when necessary and in compliance with all other provisions of the Athletic Code of Conduct.

Second Violation-Suspension from two-thirds (2/3) of scheduled contests for the current or upcoming sport or activity season with unfulfilled fraction to carry over to the next sport season when necessary and in compliance with all other provisions of the Athletic Code of Conduct.

Additional Offense(s)-Suspension from participation in extra-curricular contests for one calendar year.

In its discretion, the administration may impose greater or different penalties than those listed above for particularly serious offenses, including those involving alcohol or drugs.

Suspension Guidelines:

A student may not become involved in a new extra-curricular activity solely to serve the assigned suspension. Therefore, an administrator may prevent a student from doing so by assigning that the suspension be served during the student's next involvement in his /her regular sport/activity.

Calendar year suspensions begin with the date of the violation and are not related to the beginning or end of seasons.

Note: Students who have/had a case in Juvenile Court are still subject to the terms and conditions of the Year Around Athletic Code.

Athletic Trips:

Except in unusual instances, all trips will be made on a school bus and/or van. Athletes are expected to ride to and from contests with the team. A coach may waive this rule.

Whether at home or away, the athlete represents the school. Coaches have a great duty to inspire their athletes' best behavior.

Coaches are responsible for locker rooms at home and away. When a coach leaves a locker room, it should be in good condition.

The school district will not pay meals or lodging during the regular season.

The district will pay approved costs for transportation, meals, and lodging for actual participants in the IHSA state competitions.

Practices:

On school days, practice may begin before or after school classes. Practices and meetings will not be held on Sundays or religious holidays. When school is dismissed due to bad winter weather conditions, no practice will be held. If there is a late summer early dismissal, the head coach should modify the practice for safety purposes. If school is cancelled due to winter weather, the athletic director and administration should use good judgment in deciding the need to attend a game/tournament.

PERTINENT DISTRICT INFORMATION

CIVIL RIGHTS GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Notice of Nondiscrimination

Mercer County School District #404 will not discriminate and will provide equal educational opportunities for all students, without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, ethnicity, language barrier, religious beliefs, physical and/or mental disability, age, sexual

orientation, economic and social conditions, or actual or potential marital or parental status.

Gender Equity

Mercer County School District #404 does not discriminate on the basis of gender in the provision of programs, activities, services or benefits, and it guarantees both genders equal access to educational and extra-curricular programs and activities. Facilities and related services, equipment and supplies are neither assigned nor limited on the basis of gender (excluding shower and toilet facilities, locker rooms, dressing areas and facilities used by exempt organizations).

Uniform Grievance Procedure

Students, parents, guardians, employees, or community members should notify any District Complaint Manager if they believe that the School Board, its employees, or agents have violated their rights guaranteed by the State or federal Constitution, State or federal statute, or Board policy, or have a complaint regarding:

1. Title 2 of the Americans With Disabilities Act;
2. Title 9 of the Education Amendments of 1972;
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
4. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400et seq.
5. Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.
6. Equal Employment Opportunities Act (Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act). 42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.
7. Sexual harassment (Illinois Human Rights Act, Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title 9 of the Education Amendments of 1972);
8. The misuse of funds received for services to improve educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged or deprived children;
9. Provision of services to homeless students.

The Complaint Manager will attempt to resolve complaints without resorting to this grievance procedure and, if a complaint is filed, to address the complaint promptly and equitably. The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint filed hereunder shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies and use of this grievance procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to the pursuit of other remedies.

1. **Filing a Complaint**

A person (hereinafter Complainant) who wishes to avail him or herself of this grievance procedure may do so by filing a complaint with any District Complaint Manager. The Complainant shall not be required to file a complaint with a particular Complaint Manager and may request a Complaint Manager of the same sex. The Complaint

Manager may request the Complainant to provide a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint or require a meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student. The Complaint Manager shall assist the Complainant as needed.

2. Investigation

The Complaint Manager will investigate the complaint or appoint a qualified person to undertake the investigation on his or her behalf. If the Complainant is a student, the Complaint Manager will notify his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) that they may attend any investigatory meetings in which their child is involved. The complaint and identity of the Complainant will not be disclosed except (1) as required by law or this policy, or (2) as necessary to fully investigate the complaint, or (3) as authorized by the Complainant.

Within 10 school days of the date the complaint was filed, the Complaint Manager shall file a written report of his or her findings with the Superintendent. The Complaint Manager may request an extension of time. If a complaint of sexual harassment contains allegations involving the Superintendent, the written report shall be filed with the School Board, which will make a decision in accordance with Section 3 of this policy. The Superintendent will keep the Board informed of all complaints.

3. Decisions and Appeal

Within 5 school days after receiving the Complaint Manager's report, the Superintendent shall mail his or her written decision to the Complainant by U.S. mail, first class, as well as the Complaint Manager.

Within 5 school days after receiving the Superintendent's decision, the Complainant may appeal the decision to the School Board by making a written request to the Complaint Manager. The Complaint Manager shall promptly forward all materials relative to the complaint and appeal to the School Board. Within 10 school days, the School Board shall affirm, reverse, or amend the Superintendent's decision or direct the Superintendent to gather additional information for the Board. Within 5 school days of the Board's decision, the Superintendent shall inform the Complainant of the Board's action. The Complainant may appeal the School Board's decision to the Regional Superintendent pursuant to Section 3-10 of The School Code and, thereafter, to the State Superintendent pursuant to Section 2-3.8 of The School Code.

This grievance procedure shall not be construed to create an independent right to a School Board hearing. The failure to

strictly follow the timelines in this grievance procedure shall not prejudice any party.

The complaint managers are listed as follows:

Kathy Albert, Principal	Robert Reed, Principal
Mercer County High School	Mercer County Junior High
1500 S. College Ave.	Po Box 436
Aledo, IL 61231	Joy, IL 61260
(309) 582-2223	(309) 584-4174

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All children with disabilities have a right to a free appropriate public education as provided under the Illinois School Code. Mercer County School District shall provide, upon request, written materials and other information that indicates the specific policies, procedures, rules and regulations regarding the identification, evaluation or educational placement of children with disabilities. Inquiries should be directed to:

Director of Special Education
Apollo Elementary School
801 SW 9th Street
Aledo, IL 61231
Phone: 309/582-5350

STUDENT RECORDS (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents/guardians and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write the school principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as

requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health and medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

Directory information may be disclosed without prior notice or consent unless the parent/guardian or eligible student notifies the Records Custodian or other official in writing, before October of the current school year, that he does not want any or all of the directory information disclosed. Directory information includes the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)-
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
 2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
 3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incrimination, or demeaning behavior;
 5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
 8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of* -
 1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
 3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- *Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use -
 1. Protected information surveys of students;
 2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
 3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer to from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

Mercer County School District #404 has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal

information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. Mercer County School District will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. Mercer County School District will also directly notify, such as through US Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. Mercer County School District will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

SEXUAL, RACIAL, ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS HARRASSMENT

Sexual, racial, ethnic and religious harassment of students is prohibited.

Sexual Harassment

An employee, District agent, or student engages in sexual harassment whenever he/she makes unwelcome sexual advances, requests sexual favors, or engages in other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sex-based nature, imposed on the basis of sex, that:

1. denies or limits the provision of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment; or that makes such conduct a condition of a student's academic status; or
2. has the purpose or effect of:
 - a. substantially interfering with a student's educational environment;
 - b. creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment;

- c. depriving a student of educational aid, benefits, services, or treatment; or
- d. making submission to a rejection of such unwelcome conduct the basis of academic decisions affecting a student.

The terms “intimidating”, “hostile”, and “offensive” include conduct which has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort. Examples of sexual harassment include unwelcome touching, crude jokes or pictures, discussions of sexual experiences, teasing related to sexual characteristics, and spreading rumors related to a person’s alleged sexual activities.

Racial, Ethnic and Religious Harassment

Racial, ethnic and religious harassment include, but are not limited to: verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual in that:

- 1. has the purpose of affecting or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment;
- 2. has the purpose or affect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s academic performance;
- 3. or otherwise adversely affects an individuals academic opportunities.

Examples of harassment might include, but are not limited to, threats, insults, racial or religious slurs, unwelcome comments, jokes, pranks, gestures, or physical contact and display or circulation of derogatory or inappropriate written or other physical materials, cartoons or pictures.

Reporting Harassment

Students who believe they are victims of sexual, racial, ethnic or religious harassment or have witnessed such harassment are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Nondiscrimination Coordinator or the Complaint Manager. Students may choose to report to a person of the student’s same sex. Complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible given the need to investigate. Students who make good faith complaints will not be disciplined.

The names, addresses and telephone numbers of the District’s current Nondiscrimination Coordinators and Complaint Manger are as follows:

Nondiscrimination Coordinators:

Name: Mercer County Intermediate School
Principal Douglas Nelson
Address: 1002 SW 6th Street, Aledo, IL
Telephone No.: 582-2441

Name: Mercer County High School
Principal Kathy Albert
Address: 1500 South College Avenue, Aledo, IL
Telephone No.: 582-2223

Complaint Manager:

Name: Superintendent of Schools, Alan Boucher
Address: 801 SW 9th Street, Aledo, IL
Telephone No.: 582-2238

The Superintendent shall also use reasonable measures to inform staff members and students that the District will not tolerate sexual, ethnic or religious harassment, such as by including this policy in the appropriate handbooks.

Any District employee who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in sexual, racial, ethnic or religious harassment will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Any student of the District who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in sexual, racial, ethnic or religious harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to, suspension and expulsion consistent with the discipline policy. Any student making a knowingly false accusation regarding sexual, racial, ethnic or religious harassment will likewise be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

The Illinois State Police provides an online listing of sex offenders required to register in the State of Illinois. The database is updated daily and allows searching by name, city, county, zip code, compliance status, or any combination thereof. The list can be viewed by going to the following web address: <http://www.isp.state.il.us/sor/>. The school district will be happy to assist you with getting access to the registry if you do not have Internet access.

PARENTAL RIGHT TO REVIEW CURRICULUM

Parents have a right to review the instructional materials used by their child's classroom teacher. Parents wishing to do so should contact their child's teacher to make arrangements.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB)

Upon request, parents have a right to inspect their child's teacher's qualifications and the district's parent involvement policies. Parents also have a right to receive notice of their child's achievement level in each state academic assessment. Parents will be notified with their child has been taught by a teacher who is not highly qualified for 4 or more consecutive weeks.

TRANSPORTATION REIMBURSEMENT

The district provides transportation for all students who live more than 1.5 miles away from school. Parents can seek transportation cost reimbursement from the State if they drive their child to and from school because they feel the child's walking route is unsafe. Parents desiring to seek transportation reimbursement should contact the school by November 1 of each school year to obtain the claim forms. A copy of

procedures regarding reimbursement disputes is available to parents upon request.

ASBESTOS PLAN

Many of the district buildings contain some form of asbestos. The district maintains an asbestos plan to ensure the safety of the students and staff. Parents and community members wanting to examine the district's asbestos plan should contact the unit office.

VISION SCREENING

Each year, the district conducts vision screenings with all students. Vision screening is not a substitute for a complete eye and vision evaluation by an eye doctor. Your child is not required to undergo this vision screening if an optometrist or ophthalmologist has completed and signed a report form indicating that an examination has been administered within the previous 12 months.

