

# Secondary Student/Family Handbook

2025-2026 School Year



**Midlands STEM Charter School**

**Winnsboro, SC 29180**

**803-815-1524**

# I. Code of Conduct

## Pledge

I Will Set My Goals  
I Will Work Hard  
I Will Be Unstoppable  
I Will Trust My Teaching  
I Will Celebrate My Wins  
And I Will Win  
Because When One Wins  
We All Win!

## Mission Statement

The Mission of Midlands STEM is to produce academically and physically fit STEM-proficient students.

## School Honor Code

The Midlands STEM community embodies a spirit of mutual trust and intellectual honesty that is central to the very nature of the school and represents the highest possible expression of shared values among the members of the school community. The fundamental beliefs underlying and reflected in the Honor Code are:

- I will abide by the rules and standards of the school as written in my school handbook.
- I will behave with integrity, respect, and dignity in all relationships with teachers and peers.
- I will acknowledge the rights and property of the school and my peers.
- I will do unto others as *they* would want done to *them*.

This Honor Code summarizes the Honor Policy, which defines the expected standards of conduct in academic affairs. The Honor Policy is published on our school website [www.midlandsstem.org](http://www.midlandsstem.org). The Honor Council is the school body charged with enforcement of the Honor Code. The Honor council is to be made up of the grade level assistant principal, the general education teacher, and the president of the student council. The student body and faculty at Midlands STEM will not tolerate any violation of the Honor Code.

# II. Grading Policies

This is the weighting of each assignment.

Assessment Type	Percentage Weight	Assessment Type	Percentage Weight
Tests	30%	Classwork	25%
Quizzes	20%	Homework	10%
Projects	15%		

Your final grade for a course will be calculated as follows:

Quarter 1 20% Quarter 2 20% Quarter 3 20% Quarter 4 20% Final Exam or EOC 20%

\*\*\*All middle and high school classes will include a midterm assessment which will count as a double test grade.

*Grades will be updated regularly by Friday afternoon at 4:00pm. Please note that essays and projects may take longer to grade and return than tests and quizzes, so feedback on these assignments may be delayed.*

The grading scale is as follows:

## III. School Policies, Rules, and Procedures

### Attendance and Truancy

Attendance is an essential component of a student's academic success. Often, the number of days that students are absent accumulates without parents realizing how many days have been missed.

Children who are eligible to enter five-year kindergarten through age seventeen are subject to compulsory attendance regulations as defined by the South Carolina Code of Laws. In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, **truancy cases must be reported to the court system.**

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Ten (10) consecutive absences will result in your child being dropped from the school enrollment. A child who accumulates three (3) consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences will be deemed truant and will be signed up for an **Attendance Intervention Plan**. Midlands STEM's policy regarding attendance violations is consistent with South Carolina state laws and regulations pertaining to student Attendance and Truancy Procedures.

#### Midlands STEM considers students lawfully absent when:

- The student is ill and attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others and a medical excuse is provided;
- The student has a medical or dental appointment or other recognized licensed/certified medical practitioner and a medical excuse is provided;
- The student is participating in school-related activities that have received prior approval by the executive director or his/her designee;
- The student has been suspended from class or school;
- The parent or guardian has prearranged absences due to extreme hardship;
- There is a death or serious illness in their immediate family;
- There is a recognized religious holiday of their faith; or
- There is a required appearance in court or an appointment with a legal officer.

#### Midlands STEM considers students unlawfully absent when:

- The student is absent from school without the knowledge of the parent/legal guardian;
- The student is absent without acceptable cause with the knowledge of the parent/legal guardian;
- **Three (3) tardies constitute one (1) absence.**

South Carolina State Board of Education Regulations are as follows:

#### **SBOE Regulation 43-172: Accounting and Reporting**

**A pupil shall be dropped from membership on the day when the number of unlawful days absent exceeds ten consecutive days or when the pupil leaves school because of transfer, death, expulsion, graduation, legal withdrawal, or for any other reason.**

#### **SBOE Regulation 43-274: Student Attendance**

II. Truancy

A. Truant

A child ages 6 to 17 years meets the definition of a **truant when the child has three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences.**

B. Habitual Truant

**A "habitual truant" is a child aged 12 to 17 years who fails to comply with the intervention plan developed by the school, the child, and the parents) or guardians(s) and who accumulates two or more additional unlawful absences. This child may need court intervention and an initial truancy petition may be**

filed. The written intervention plan, and documentation of non-compliance must be attached to the truancy petition asking for court intervention.

Please note that Midlands STEM makes every effort to comply with compulsory attendance regulations in order to provide students with a high-quality education. **In the event that a student has been lawfully absent and the absence has not been excused by the school, please submit any documentation meeting the lawfully allowed absentee criteria listed above within 3 business days to the office.** Should you have questions regarding attendance, please contact Mrs. Robertson, Attendance and PowerSchool coordinator at 803-815-1524

## Dress Code

As we prepare all students for success by providing meaningful, challenging, and engaging learning experiences, including preparing them for college and/or career success, it is important students' clothing, articles, and displays of items promote safety, consideration for others and the orderly operation of the school. The universal dress code is as follows:

Students must wear:

- Tops (shirt, blouse, sweater, sweatshirt, tank, etc.); with fabric in the front, back and on the sides and under the arms; and
- Bottoms to the tip of a student's lower middle finger point when standing straight (pants, shorts, skirt, dress, etc.); and
- Appropriate, solid-soled shoes are necessary to ensure safety during school activities. For this reason, slides, flip-flops, house slippers, and bedroom slippers are not permitted.

Students must **not** wear attire that:

- Is pornographic, contains threats or promotes illegal or violent conduct, alcohol, smoking, drugs, or other age-restricted material;
- Demonstrates hate group association/affiliation and/or uses hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation or other protected groups; ● Shows private parts (swimsuit areas). Private parts must be covered by clothing that is opaque (not able to be seen through);
- Shows skin on the student's abdomen or any area between the top and bottom of garments; ● Has rips, tears or holes above the knee, unless permanent patches or leggings are worn underneath (temporary patches such as napkins, writing paper, or bandanas are not acceptable);
- Shows any part of undergarments;
- Leggings or tights unless covered by appropriate tunic/upper-thigh length dress/shirt/skirt/shorts; **MUST COMPLETELY COVER THE STUDENT'S BACKSIDE/BOTTOM**
- Covers the student's face to the extent that the student is not identifiable (except that worn for religious purposes) or covers the student to the point that they cannot be identified from the front or the back (ski masks, etc.);
- Demonstrates gang association or affiliation;
- May be used as a weapon.

Hats, sunglasses, head coverings, and/or hoods may not be worn **inside** any classroom or building, including hallways. This is a privilege and the policy can be modified if abused by students attempting to wear these items once they are in the buildings..

Attire worn in observance of a student's religion is not subject to this policy. Additional provisions may be required by the Principal or their designee when necessary to ensure safety or if required for participation in activities such as fine arts, extra-curricular activities/events, or sports/athletics.

Enforcement:

Students shall not be disciplined or removed from class as a consequence of wearing attire in violation of

this policy unless the attire creates a substantial disruption to the educational environment or poses a hazard to the health and safety of the wearer or others. Students, at the discretion of the principal or their designee, may be asked to briefly leave the classroom to change clothes or to cover or remove attire that does not comply with the dress code policy. Students shall not be referred to as “a distraction” based on their appearance or attire. All staff will use reasonable efforts to avoid speaking to students about their attire in the presence of other students, staff or other adults unrelated to the student. Discussions with students about violations of the Student Attire policy or this Administrative Rule should be done in a manner that does not cause embarrassment to the student. Principals are required to ensure that all staff are aware of and understand the guidelines of this policy.

Consequences:

- 1st Violation - Warning
- 2nd Violation - Parent contact, minor referral
- 3rd Violation - Parent conference scheduled, major referral issued
- 4th Violation - OSS issued

## Bathroom Usage

Students will report to their class period blocks FIRST for attendance/roll (student restrooms are closed during passing period). Students will not use the restroom during the first 15 or last 15 minutes of class. To prevent disruption of instruction, teachers will maintain and manage a sign-out document (paper or electronic) to allow one student out for restroom use. Only one student is permitted to exit at a time and the time leaving and returning must be reported on the sign out document. Students have a maximum of 6 minutes for restroom use including time left, time in restroom, and time returning. Teachers **will not** permit another student to leave for the restroom until the previous student returns and signs in. Everyone has a right to privacy in the stall of the restroom. Only one person per stall. Anything that is contraband in the classroom, is contraband in the bathroom. The bathroom is not to be used for social media content creation, vaping or any other prohibited activity.

Location Specific Information

- MS & HS students will not use the restrooms on the elementary wing or the Related Arts hallway unless during a building emergency or maintenance need.

## Tardiness

Students have three minutes in their schedule to transition from one class to another. Any student arriving to class after this time without a pass will be marked tardy. Any student arriving 10 or more minutes late, will receive an immediate Discipline Referral for Cutting Class and be sent to an administrator.

Consequences:

- 1st & 2nd Violation - Warning
- 3rd Violation - Admin Conference/Parent Contacted
- 4th Violation and Beyond- Attendance Meeting Scheduled

## Identification Badges

Student IDs are required for all middle and high school students, school employees, and visitors. ID badges are to be visible at all times on campus. To assist with this safety issue, students and staff will be issued wearable ID cards. A student must:

- wear their ID card properly while on school grounds on a school-issued lanyard around the neck (including recess and PE);
- wear only their own ID card and never one that belongs to someone else;
- not alter their ID card in any way (including chewing on them); and
- not place unapproved decals or stickers on their ID card.

Upon entering the school for the first time, a student will be issued an ID card and a lanyard at no charge to the student. The card will identify the student by name and grade level. The card should be kept in good

condition. Each student will be issued a new ID card annually. Students may not check out textbooks or technology, or obtain lunch without their ID card. Lost or destroyed ID cards must be replaced by the student. Temporary IDs cost \$1 at the front desk. A temporary ID is only valid for ONE day. Temporary IDs will be worn around the neck like a normal ID. *The temporary ID must be returned to the front desk at dismissal or a \$5 fine will be assessed for a lost temporary ID.* Replacement ID cards and replacement lanyards are \$5 cash at the front desk.

In the event a student forgets their ID at home or needs a new ID, they must go directly to the office and purchase a temporary or replacement ID **before** going to their first class in order to avoid a violation. A violation occurs when a student's ID is not properly displayed around their neck. All in-class violations after homeroom will follow the school-wide progressive discipline model and a violation will advance the student a step on the progressive discipline tracker.

## Phone and Headphone Policy See Behavior Policy in section IX

### Public Displays of Affection (PDA)

Being overly affectionate in school creates an environment that is not conducive to concentration and learning, therefore students should refrain from inappropriate, intimate behaviors on campus or at school-related events & activities. Students are expected to show good taste and conduct themselves respectfully at all times. Examples of PDA include but are not limited to: hugging, kissing, holding hands, touching faces, sitting on another student's lap, and putting legs across another student's lap.

Consequences:

- 1st Violation- Teacher Conference, Teacher contacts home, minor referral
- 2nd Violation - Reported to Admin, major referral issued
- 3rd Violation - Resolution Meeting scheduled, OSS issued

### Acceptable Use of Technology Policy

All parents and students must sign an acceptable use agreement (a separate document) and submit it to the IT Coordinator before being issued school equipment. Personal computers and other technology are prohibited during school hours. Students who disable, remove or otherwise attempt to circumvent the monitoring software will receive a discipline referral. Students will be held accountable for the contents of the acceptable use policy anytime using a school device or school network. School technology checked out to students becomes the responsibility of that student. The cost of any equipment that is lost, damaged, or is no longer identifiable will be the responsibility of the student and their guardians. Failure to comply may result in loss of privileges.

Consequences:

- 1st Violation - Warning
- 2nd Violation - Counselor Conference, minor referral
- 3rd Violation - Loss of technology privileges for 1 school week, Admin conference, major referral, family contacted
- 4th Violation - Family Meeting scheduled, pending ISS/OSS, possible revocation of school issued device

### Food and Beverage Policy

- These rules are at the classroom teacher's discretion, and subject to the allergies of your teachers and classmates.
- There should be no eating in the classroom unless an individual teacher has given direct permission, and if eating is allowed, students must be responsible to clean up after themselves.
- All beverages should have a top that helps to prevent spills. Water is the preferred beverage for students to drink in the classroom, but ultimately students must be responsible to clean up after themselves.

### Student Parking Procedures

Students must register to park on campus. Students will be assigned a parking area and must only park in the assigned location. Students must also place their parking pass in a visible location on the dash of the car. There will be a \$5 fee if the parking tag is lost. Students will not be permitted to go to their cars during the school day without a signed agenda. Students that violate these parking procedures will lose the privilege of parking/driving to school.

## Homework Policy

- Assignments are due at the beginning of class. If the student cannot produce the assignment at the time it is called for, it will be considered a late assignment. The student will still be responsible for the content of the homework assignment.
- If it is determined that one student is copying another student's homework, both students will receive zeroes. This is a violation of the Honor Code.
- If students are unsure about an assignment, they should check with a reliable classmate, email the teacher, or check Google Classroom for directions.

## Testing Procedure

- Students must adhere to test-taking procedures as described by the teacher.
- Students who do not adhere to test-taking procedures will be removed from the classroom to complete the test with an administrator. The parents or guardians of the student will also be notified.

## Makeup Work Policy

- It is the student's responsibility to contact the teacher about any missed work during an excused absence. Students will be expected to make up assignments within a period of time equal to the number of days the student was absent. A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

## Late Work Policy

- All work is due on the date assigned by the teacher. Any work not turned in on the date assigned will receive late work penalties as follows:
  - o Missing assignments will be indicated on weekly worklists.
  - o Students will have 5 school days to submit the assignment after it was missed with no penalty.
  - o No work will be accepted after the 5th late day without a note from the parent explaining the extenuating circumstances.
  - o Work submitted after the 5th day will earn a maximum grade of 70%.
- It is the student's responsibility to email the teacher informing them that the assignment has been submitted.

## Extra Credit

- Extra credit assignments will not be given. Extension activities may be available if students have completed all assignments for a given week.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of someone else's words or ideas as your own, also including words or ideas generated by Artificial Intelligence. You must quote and cite or paraphrase and cite someone else's work used in your paper to avoid plagiarism. Any paper found to contain plagiarized parts will receive a zero, and the student will receive a discipline referral. If a peer shares work or contributes to plagiarism of another student's paper, the same consequences will apply to the other student(s). Sharing of information for tests, quizzes, homework, etc. also results in a zero on the assignment and/or discipline notice for both students.

## Academic Responsibilities

**At all times, academic integrity must be preserved, and all students are held to the honor code.** Students are expected to read all assigned materials (use of Spark Notes, Cliff Notes, and such are secondary to the primary texts). Individuals are expected to complete their own work. Plagiarism and copying another person's work and claiming it as your own will not be tolerated. These acts not only cheat the individual but also damage Midlands STEM's integrity. Consequences for such acts are zeroes on the assignment for all involved, and discipline notices which may result in further punishment to be decided by the Honor Council.

## Teacher/Student Conferences

Teachers will be available for conferencing on Fridays after 12:30 pm, before school and after school until 4pm unless otherwise specified. Students must let the teacher know when they will be coming to discuss grades, assignments, or other matters. Because conference times have been made available, these matters should not be discussed during the class period.

## Retakes and Reteaching

Makeup of missed assignments and retakes of tests and quizzes are at the teacher's discretion provided that students have made an appropriate effort and attended reteaching sessions during class if offered by the teacher or during after-school tutoring. Students who receive a 59 or below on any test or quiz will be required to attend reteaching.

## After-School Tutoring

Each grade level team (PK-12th) will establish an intervention/tutoring plan to support student achievement. Academic support may be provided before school, during the school day, or after school. Parent/Family pick-up is required for all students participating in after school tutoring support.

## Mode of Transportation & Dismissal Procedures

All students are assumed to be car riders by default unless the school is notified by the parent in writing, which will include a map of the path that they will take to get home. Only students who live no more than a mile away, and have a parent notification on file, may walk to and from school. Students may only walk to and from school to a residence; students may not leave campus on foot to be picked up from a gas station, campus boundaries, or other public area. If a student is not a designated walker, parents are expected to enter the car line and pick up their students in the designated locations. Only adults listed in PowerSchool may pick up a student. If you would like your student to leave with anyone else, the school needs to be notified in writing (or by email from the parent) before dismissal that day. All families will be issued two car rider pick up tags. No student will be allowed to leave with anyone that does not have this tag. We take your student's safety very seriously and will not release them to any unauthorized person.

## Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities

For a student to be eligible for extracurricular activities such as Field Trips and/or After-School Events, a student must not have had In-School Suspension (ISS) within the previous six weeks, or Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) within the previous nine weeks. This includes consequences given for high-level discipline behaviors, as well as excessive low-level behaviors, whose consequences follow the school-wide progressive discipline model. Students must also attend school the entire day before an after-school activity, and/or must not have an unexcused absence the day before a field trip.

## IV. Record of Student Progress

The following procedures will be used to monitor and record student progress.

1. Gradebook/PowerSchool: Each student will have a line in which grades are recorded. Grades will also be entered in PowerSchool, which is an electronic grading system. All graded assignments will be recorded.

Parents will have access to Powerschool via Parent Portal.

2. Other records: Other means of monitoring and recording student progress will include interims, report cards, student/teacher conferences, parent/teacher conferences, notes and/or phone calls home. Documentation of the above is kept in the classroom. Parents are encouraged to link to their student's Google Classroom account in order to gain extra insight into classroom assignments and grading procedures.

*Grades will be updated weekly by Friday afternoon. Please note that essays and projects may take longer to grade and return than tests and quizzes, so feedback on these assignments may be delayed. Students will earn true grades on assignments, but there will be no grade below 50 on their report card.*

*All students must keep backup copies of all work submitted. If a grade is missing or incorrect, the student is responsible for bringing it to the teacher's attention, providing the dated backup copy and proof of submission. Save everything until the final grades are posted.*

## V. Curriculum and Reading

Classes are comprehensive courses designed to encourage student thinking, problem-solving, and reading skills. As such, some material will include coarse language and suggestive themes. These books and materials have all been approved for use by students at the secondary school level and chosen directly from historical and scientific records or the literary canon.

*Texts may be modified or adjusted throughout the year at the teacher's discretion.*

## VI. Materials and Resources

### Writing Materials

- Charged, school-issued laptop. (Students who fail to charge their devices may be made to do assignments for that day on paper. All assignments will be due at the end of class and students will be issued lunch detention.)
- Pen/pencil (blue or black ink preferred, assignments written in difficult-to-see inks will not be accepted.)

\*All students should purchase supplies as indicated by the school supply list prior to the start of the school year.

## VII. Classroom Expectations

1. Trustworthiness
2. Respect
3. Responsibility
4. Fairness
5. Caring
6. Citizenship

Each classroom teacher is responsible for developing and managing classroom expectations. This internal classroom management tool is an extension of the schoolwide expectations and must include consequences and rewards. Copies of this plan are available to families and shared on each teacher's family communication tool (Google Classroom, Remind, Teacher website, etc).

**Infractions severe enough to require immediate consequences, suspension, or expulsion are laid out in the school discipline plan which can be found on the school website.**

## VIII. Scheduling Parent-Teacher Conferences:

End of Nine-Week conferences grades PK-12th will be scheduled during the last two weeks of all four grading periods. Conferences **are required** for all students regardless of performance status. Conferences are preferred to be primarily in person, but are available to be scheduled via phone or virtual when a scheduling conflict is presented. Teachers are available for conferences during the planning period, before school, and after school. Parents should schedule meetings with teachers and administrators by phone before coming to the school to ensure that the teacher or administrator is available. **Parents/Families MUST be notified by the teacher at the**

*Progress Report window of any student not meeting performance standards. An academic intervention plan will be developed within an MTSS academic conference.*

## IX. Note on Disciplinary Procedures:

### Behavior Policy

#### Behavior Policies and Procedures

Midlands STEM will require good manners, respect for self and others, appreciation for property, honesty, punctuality, reliability, and responsibility from all students, staff, parents, and community participants. We believe that teachers have a right to teach, and students have a right to learn. We fully expect the focus on ethics and decision-making to lead to an environment where good character is important to all.

Midlands STEM has adopted a description of violations defined as Class I, II, or III offenses. The school has determined that students who exhibit any Class I offense will be subject to primarily school-based action yet may receive a 1 day out-of-school suspension for offenses that are repeated. A Class II violation may result in a modification of the school day including up to temporary suspension from Midlands STEM for up to 10 days. To re-enter the school, the student must show evidence that indicates that he or she is now focused on academic, motivational, and behavioral aspects of his or her life. **Any student receiving a total of three (3) out-of-school suspensions within a current academic year, or committing any Class III offense, may be expelled from the school and may not be eligible for re-application.**

Day-to-day application of the discipline code will be the responsibility of the teacher and Administration. . Disciplinary issues will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and an appeal procedure will be available for consideration by the Administration and the Midlands STEM Board. All Class III offenses will be automatically appealed.

#### **Middle School Discipline System: (Addresses multiple Level I violations)**

**Phase 1-After 3rd referral, student success meeting to discuss behavior**

**Phase 2-After 6th referral, second student success meeting to discuss behavior**

**Phase 3-After 9th referral, third student success meeting, behavior contract is developed and signed**

#### **MINOR**

##### **Rule 1: Attendance Violations**

Unless a lawful excuse is presented, a student must attend every class every day. In addition to any administrative response, the student may be required to comply with MSC recovery procedures.

##### **Rule 2: Littering**

Students will not willfully, with or without malice, participate individually or with others to litter.

##### **Rule 3: Chronic Unpreparedness**

Students are expected to bring all materials related to their education on a consistent basis.

##### **Rule 4: Dress Code Violation** (see section on Dress code for specifics)

Students will maintain personal attire and grooming standards that promote safety, health, and acceptable

standards of social conduct, and are not disruptive to the educational environment. This will include student clothing that materially and substantially disrupts classes or other school activities, including but not limited to, gang articles of clothing.

## **MAJOR**

### **Rule 5: Honor Code Violations**

Students will be honest and submit his/her own work.

**Altering Report Cards or Notes:** Tampering with report cards, official passes, notes, or other school documents in any manner including changing grades or forging names to excuses, is prohibited.

**False Information:** Making false statements, written or oral, to anyone in authority is prohibited. **Cheating:**

Includes, but is not limited to, talking to other students during individual testing, plagiarism or copying another student's test or assignment is prohibited. The Managing Director has the discretion to pursue violations of this rule as Class III if the student's actions have a serious detrimental effect on other students or staff. **\*\*Students**

**deemed to be cheating will receive loss of credit for assignment/test as well as appropriate disciplinary action.**

### **Rule 6: General Disruptive Behavior**

Students will maintain appropriate behavior so as to refrain from disrupting the class, school, or bus activity and be prepared for instruction at all times. Students shall not talk out in class or move from their assigned seat/area without permission, throw objects (except as directed by staff for an instructional purpose), horseplay, harass, tease, or make rude noises. This includes challenges by students that could be harmful to self or others. **Repeated violations of this rule may be punished as a Tier III infraction.**

### **Rule 7: Insubordination**

Students will obey the lawful direction of any authorized staff member while in school, participating in a school activity, or on school property. All students are expected to behave in a respectful manner. This includes, but is not limited to, complying with the direction or instruction of a staff member, not walking away from a staff member while being spoken to, speaking to staff in an appropriate manner, and completing all assigned work.

### **Rule 8: Inappropriate language and or obscene gestures**

Students will use appropriate conduct and language at school and school functions and possess only appropriate materials. This rule applies to cursing, possessing written materials, or electronic text and/or images that convey an offensive, racial, derogatory, bullying, or obscene message to another person (including, but not limited to, references to race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, and/or physical or sensory disability, physical appearance, or making offensive statements or gestures).

### **Rule 9: Leaving designated areas without the proper permission**

Violations of this rule include tardiness, cutting school or class, and excessive absences.

### **Rule 10: Personal Property**

Students will only bring or possess objects that have an educational purpose and will not distract from teaching or learning. Students will sell items on campus only as part of an approved school activity. (All other items will be confiscated and returned to the parent at a mutually agreeable time, not to exceed one calendar week.) The following are among the list of prohibited items:

- **Personal electronic devices:** SC Proviso 1.103 Prohibits the possession of cellular telephones during the school operation day. Midlands STEM's school operation day is Monday -Thursday 8:00 am to 2:55 pm and Fridays 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. **Every student must conceal their personal electronic device in their book bag or purse while riding the bus and throughout the instructional day. Students will not be allowed to carry these devices in their clothing pockets.** Violations of any other rule in the *MSC Parent and Student Handbook* with a personal electronic device, including

insubordination or multiple violations of this rule will be addressed by losing the privilege to possess the personal electronic device on school property and the consequences outlined under the specific rule violated. However, this policy lists exclusions or exceptions that might occur. Such as students can use personal devices if specified by an IEP, Medical Plan, 504, etc.

- Consequences:
  - *1st offense*: personal electronic device is confiscated, sent to office, and returned at end of the day
  - *2nd offense*: personal electronic device is confiscated until the parent/guardian picks it up from the office.
  - *3rd offense*: personal electronic device is confiscated, parents are contacted, phone is not allowed on campus for the rest of the school year
  - *4th offense*: personal electronic device is suspended and restricted from bringing a cellphone on campus.
  - *5th offense* :personal electronic device is recommendation for expulsion
  
- **Toys, games, pagers and electronic equipment**: Possession of these or any similar devices, without permission of the administration, is prohibited. Such items include, but are not limited to, IPODs and other MP3 Players, and PDAs and other electronic devices capable of peer-to-peer communication and recording audio and/or video/still images, except when being used as a part of instruction.
- **Smart Watches**- Students are permitted to wear smartwatches at school. When testing, students may be asked to remove them to ensure test security. Students deemed to be using watches in inappropriate manner will have them confiscated and returned according to cell phone policy

\*\*Administration reserves the right to give school consequences up to and including ISS and OSS for repeated violations.

#### **Rule 11: Stealing or possessing stolen property (≤ \$100)**

Students will not steal or possess stolen property, or participate with others to do so. Stolen property includes any object that is possessed without the permission of the owner.

#### **Rule 12: Vandalism (≤ \$100)**

Students will not willfully, with or without malice, participate with others to litter, damage, or destroy property of another, including property belonging to the school, district, staff, students, or other adults on campus or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property. A student or parent/guardian will be held financially responsible, as allowed by law, for willful or malicious destruction of property.

#### **Rule 13: Inappropriate public displays of affection**

Different people have different opinions on what constitutes appropriate behavior of affection. Differences in cultural morals are also a source of different ideas about what constitutes appropriate behavior. MSC has determined that inappropriate public displays of affection include, but are not limited to, kissing on the lips, hugging from behind, sitting on laps, and licking.

#### **Rule 14: Tobacco**

Students shall not use, sell, distribute, or possess any kind of tobacco product or associated paraphernalia on school property or at a school function. The first violation of this rule shall be a Class I infraction. Subsequent violations will be Class II or III infractions. Possession of rolling papers is treated as a violation of Class III Drug Offense.

#### **Rule 15: Threatening /Intimidation**

Students shall not threaten to strike, attack, or harm any person or cause another person to become fearful by intimidation, through any medium, including threats made in person, on the telephone and/or in writing, that

pose a safety risk to the school environment. The class offense will be determined by the level of risk presented by the threat, whether the threat could reasonably be carried out and whether the threatened person is made fearful. This rule violation could be considered a Class I, II or III Offense based on the facts of the case.

**Rule 16: Stealing or possessing stolen property (≥\$100)**

Students will not steal or possess stolen property, or participate with others to do so. Stolen property includes any object that is possessed without the permission of the owner.

**Rule 17: Violation of local laws and ordinances:**

- **Burglary:** A student will not unlawfully enter any district property with the intent of committing a felony, to steal and/or take and carry away the property of another, or to attempt to commit the taking of property.
- **Robbery:** A student will not take or attempt to take another person's property by force or violence.
- **Extortion:** A student will not take, threaten or attempt to take the property (including but not limited to money) of others through intimidation.
- **Drugs:** A student will not engage in behaviors that involve illegal drugs that are in violation of local, state, or federal laws and ordinances.
- **Sexual Offense:** A student will not engage in sexual behavior that results in the violation of local laws and ordinances.

**Rule 18: Vandalism (≥\$100)**

Students will not willfully, with or without malice, participate with others to litter, damage, or destroy property of another, including property belonging to the school, district, staff, students or other adults on campus or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property. A student or parent/guardian will be held financially responsible, as allowed by law, for willful or malicious destruction of property.

**Rule 19: Repeated Class I and/or Class II Offenses**

Repeated incidents of generally disruptive behavior will result in Student Success Meetings where behavior will be discussed and a plan for success will be instituted. Following the Discipline System, as referrals increase more student success meetings are triggered. If Student reaches 10 referrals, the student can be recommended for expulsion based on their behavior.

**Rule 20: Sexual Behavior**

Students shall not engage in any sexual behavior on school property or at a school-sponsored activity. ●

● **Offensive Touching:** A student shall not engage in unwanted touching of an offensive or sexual nature. (This may be a Class I, II or III infraction based on the facts of the case.)

● **Sexual Harassment:** A student shall not engage in unwanted verbal or physical (e.g. gesturing) conduct of a sexual nature which may reasonably be regarded as intimidating, hostile, or offensive. (This may be a Class II or III infraction based on the facts of the case.)

● **Indecent Exposure:** A student shall not intentionally expose private body parts, including but not limited to, the display of the buttocks (mooning). (This may be a Class I, II or III infraction based on the facts of the case.)

● **Consensual Sexual Activity:** A student shall not engage in consensual sexual activity. (For elementary students, this may be a Class I, II, or III infraction based on the facts of the case.) "Consensual" means all parties are willing participants in the activity.

● **Sexual Battery:** A student shall not attempt to engage in sexual activity against another person by force, threat, or fear.

**Rule 21: Weapons or Dangerous Items**

Students will not possess, handle, transport, or use any weapon, object that can be reasonably considered a weapon, dangerous object, or substance that could cause harm or irritation to another individual on school

property or at any school function. All items will be confiscated and will not be returned except with the mutual agreement of school and law enforcement. This rule does not apply to school supplies (i.e., pencil, laser pointer) unless used as a weapon. Note: any object thrown from a school bus will be treated as a weapon.

**Special Note: See the Safe Harbor Provision. *Prohibited items include, but are not limited to the following:***

- Toy knife or look-a-like knife
- Weapon not capable of propelling a missile
- Knife
- Box cutter/razor blade
- Camouflaged weapon
- Object thrown from a bus
- Ammunition
- Fireworks
- Bomb (includes destructive devices such as an explosive, incendiary or poison gas, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than 4 ounces, missile with an explosive charge of more than 1/4 ounce, mine, or similar device)
- Airsoft gun, BB gun, pellet gun
- Any object or substance that could cause injury including, but not limited to, slingshots, ice picks, multi-fingered rings, metal knuckles, nunchucks, Bowie knives, dirks, daggers, lead canes, switchblade knives, clubs, stun guns, starter pistols, BB guns, flare guns, air rifles, air pistols, airsoft pellet guns or paintball guns, mace, fire extinguishers, and/or the use of any object or any substance that will potentially cause harm, irritation, or bodily injury.

#### **Rule 22: Aggressive Verbal and Physical Action**

Students shall not exhibit any form of aggressive physical or verbal action against another student, staff member, or any other adult at school. Minor incidents of hitting, biting, spitting, shoving, kicking, or throwing objects at a student or adult may be a Class I or II infraction.

- **Verbal Confrontation/Provocation:** A student shall not approach another person in a confrontational, provocative, or bullying manner. This will include attempts to intimidate or instigate another person to fight or commit other acts of physical aggression. (This may also be a Class II infraction.)
- **Fighting:** The exchange of mutual aggressive physical contact between students, with or without injury, is prohibited. (The first violation of this rule may be a Tier II infraction so long as it does not involve a weapon or result in injury or disruption to the educational environment, and will result in no more than an out-of-school suspension of five days. Subsequent violations, or those that cause injury or disruption, shall be a Class III infraction.) A student who is physically attacked may act in self-defense without consequence. **Self-defense** is defined as the act by a nonaggressive victim using reasonable force to avoid being hit in order to enable oneself to get free from the attacker and notify school authorities. It is not self-defense to participate in the fight. Students who exceed reasonable force in protecting themselves will be disciplined for violating this rule even though another person provoked the fight. Administrators will have the discretion to recognize the need for self-defense on an incident-by-incident basis.
- **Assault on a Student:** A student shall not physically attack another student. See self-defense as defined above. **Multiple Assaults:** A student shall not act in concert to physically attack another student.
- **Assault on a Staff Member:** A student shall not physically attack a staff member or other adult. See self-defense as defined above. **Multiple Assaults:** A student shall not act in concert to physically attack a staff member or other adult.
- **Inciting to Riot/Chaos:** A student shall not engage in behavior of a violent or aggressive nature in a highly volatile area that could result in a riot, widespread chaos, or aggressive actions (verbal and/or physical) by students witnessing or involved in the incident.
- **Refusing to Disperse:** A student who witnesses an incident under this rule shall disperse at the request of staff members.
- **Participation in a Civil Demonstration:** A student shall not disrupt the school day by participating in a civil demonstration, including leaving campus without permission.

### **Rule 23: Drugs/Illegal Substances, Alcohol, Prescription Drugs**

Students shall not use, purchase, sell, distribute, be under the influence of, or possess any kind of tobacco, alcoholic beverage, controlled substance (as defined by state law), illegal or counterfeit substance. ● **ALCOHOL:** Students shall not possess, use, distribute, or be under the influence of alcohol on school property or at a school function.

- **MARIJUANA:** Students shall not possess, use, be under the influence of marijuana, or possess associated drug paraphernalia on school property or at a school function. “Marijuana” is defined to also include synthetic cannabinoids. Possession of large amounts, or of more than one individually wrapped package of marijuana, will be deemed to be an attempt to sell illegal drugs.
- **DRUGS/ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES, COUNTERFEIT DRUGS AND PARAPHERNALIA:**
  - ***Use, Influence, or Possession of Drugs/Paraphernalia:*** For drugs other than marijuana, students shall not use or be under the influence of illegal or controlled substances or possess illegal, counterfeit, or controlled substances (including prescription drugs without a doctor’s order filed with the school), or drug paraphernalia on school property or at a school function.
  - ***Sale/Distribution (Attempt or Actual):*** Students shall not distribute, sell, attempt to sell, or possess with intent to sell any illegal, counterfeit, or controlled substance. Possession of a large amount of, or more than one individually wrapped package of, a controlled or illegal substance will be considered evidence that the student intended to sell or distribute the product.

**Board Appeal:** All Class III Offenses will be automatically appealed through a Due Process Hearing conducted by the Executive Board. The primary purpose of the Due Process Hearing is to allow both parties to present and respond to evidence presented. A MSC Board Member shall preside over the Due Process Hearing. Prior to this meeting, you have the right to review your child’s educational records. During this meeting, you have the right (1) to examine evidence the school presents; (2) to present relevant evidence in response to the allegations; (3) to confront and cross-examine witnesses that the school makes available and who support the allegations; (4) to call witnesses who will verify your child’s version of events; (5) to have an advocate present to assist in your child’s appeal; and, (6) to have counsel present to represent your child.

**Safe Harbor Note:** Any student who inadvertently possesses or finds a weapon or substance, which may subject the student to a possible expulsion, may or may not be recommended for these sanctions if the student voluntarily surrenders the property to a school staff person prior to discovery by another person. This should be done as soon as the student realizes that he/she is in possession of or has knowledge about the weapon or substance.

### **Searches**

The MSC Board reserves the right to authorize the Administration and/or his/her designee to search a student’s belongings, including suspicion of an imminent danger to the student or others. At the time of the search, only the student and involved personnel will be present so as to maintain the student’s privacy. Parents of any involved students will be notified as soon as possible if such actions are required.

### **Sexual Harassment and Bullying**

MSC prohibits unlawful sexual harassment of any student or other person. Prohibited sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal or physical, including, but not limited to, insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct and inappropriate touching. MSC believes bullying is a form of harassment. Bullying is defined as the repeated intimidation of others by the real or threatened infliction of physical, verbal, written, electronically transmitted, or emotional abuse, or through attacks on the property of another. It may include, but is not limited to, actions such as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, extortion

of money or possessions, and exclusion from peer groups within school. The above allegations are to be reported to the teacher and the guidance counselor. All allegations are then investigated and reported to the proper authorities, including but not limited to, parents and local law enforcement. Retaliation for the reporting of sexual harassment or bullying will be met with additional disciplinary consequences. \*\*Cyberbullying or harassment through Social Media accounts can also be grounds for suspension or expulsion.

The particular consequences for violations of this policy shall be determined by the school administrators. The Administrator or designee and the Board shall determine when school expulsion and/or legal action

Every effort is made to ensure that all students have a fair chance to learn, therefore the above rules and consequences are necessary. In keeping with this philosophy, teachers treat all students with fairness and respect, as their main concern is that all students be present in class so that they have an opportunity to learn. Only severe infractions, which infringe upon the rights of other students to learn, will necessitate students being taken out of the instructional setting

## **Middle & High School Student Handbook Signature Page**

Please review this information thoroughly as a family. Then, verify with the signatures below that all are aware of the responsibilities and expectations of the school and confirm that you are prepared to complete all assigned material.

Please return this page by **Friday 11/1/24.**

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**Student**

**Name (Print) Student Signature**

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**Parent/Guardian Name (Print) Parent/Guardian Signature**

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**Today's Date**