

Student Handbook



2024-2025

Mount Carmel Area Jr. Sr. High School Administration:

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Mr. Aaron Domanski, High School Principal

Mr. John Darrah, Junior High Principal

Mrs. Kelly Crissman, Special Education Coordinator

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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Mount Carmel Area Junior-Senior High School. This handbook will assist you with the transition to our school. Please share this information with your parents. In addition, the handbook is a very good resource to help you and your parents answer any questions about policies and procedures. If you have any questions or problems please contact the JH-SH Principal's Office or Guidance Office.

Have a successful and memorable school year!

MCA VISION STATEMENT

IT IS THE VISION OF THE MOUNT CARMEL AREA EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY TO CREATE A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THAT NURTURES THE INTELLECTUAL, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING OF EACH CHILD.

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ATTENDANCE

The Mount Carmel Area School District's attendance policy is required to ensure maximum student attendance and punctuality. No factor has a more direct relationship to a student's success than a good attendance record. Our school can best fulfill its goals when students are present in the classroom.

The student's parent/guardian is legally responsible to ensure their child attends school on a regular basis and is absent only for reasons allowed by law (illness, death in the immediate family, and educational excuse are the most common). Any parent/guardian found violating the law is subject to prosecution, fines (up to \$300), court costs, and sentencing to complete a parent education course. If the parent is not convicted and the child continues to be truant, the child will be fined up to \$300 or be assigned to the adjudication alternative education program. In addition, the juvenile's driving privileges may be revoked.

In an effort to further reduce truancy our school district has partnered with Northumberland County Children and Youth Agency which developed a Truancy Prevention Specialized Unit. This Unit utilizes Children and Youth and Juvenile Probation staff. Their purpose is to assist families, who by law (PA ACT 138), have been identified as truant. This will include:

- Attendance at Student Attendance Improvement Plan meetings (SAIP)
- Direct contact with students and families
- Offering community based supports
- Facilitating Parental Truancy Assistance Program (PTAP)
- Recommending and referring to Children and Youth
- Recommending and attending magisterial hearings

A child is considered Truant after accumulating 3 or more unexcused absences and habitually truant after 6 or more unexcused absences. Parents can contact Northumberland County Children and Youth at (570) 988-4237 or email truancy@norrycopa.net.

Absences:

- Parents should call the school by 9:00 a.m. (339-1500 ext. 3134) to report a student's absence.
- Students must present a written excuse for an absence to the attendance office (in the television studio) within 3 days of returning from the absence. All absences are marked unexcused until the district receives a written excuse explaining the absence.
- After a student has accumulated (3) unexcused absences within the school year, an official notice will be mailed to the parents/guardians. The parent/guardian will be invited to attend a *Student Attendance Improvement Plan* meeting to discuss attendance issues with their child. Parents who fail to comply with the provisions of the compulsory attendance law, on summary conviction thereof, will be required to pay a fine plus court costs.
- After (6) unexcused absences a referral may also be sent to Northumberland County Children & Youth Service and Juvenile Probation for attendance issues. Any unexcused absence after a warning letter will constitute a fine being levied against the parent/guardian of the student and the student or another suggested disposition by the District Magistrate. Fines will continue for any additional unlawful/unexcused absences.
- The MCA attendance office will review the attendance records of students who have missed ten (10%) of the days school has been in session. A review will be held on the 45th, 90th and 135th day of the school term.
- Please be advised that truancy is considered public information and may be released to local news agencies, if requested.
- Students who miss an excessive number of school days will be required to provide a doctor's excuse. After 7 days of absence (or 10% of the school term) a warning letter will be sent to the parent. After 10 days of absence (or 10% of the school term) parents will be notified in writing that a doctor's note may be required for all subsequent absences. Failure to provide a doctor's excuse when required will cause the absence to be unlawful or unexcused. After (3) unexcused absences, a warning letter will be sent to the parent and they will

be required to attend a student attendance improvement plan meeting.

- A maximum of (10) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by parental notification shall be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days shall require an excuse from a licensed physician.
- Students with excessive absences (10 or more unexcused days per year) will not be allowed to participate in sports, extracurricular activities, clubs, prom, operetta, dances, etc. for the remainder of the school year. Unusual circumstances will be handled at the discretion of the administration.
- Families are encouraged to take vacations during the summer months to ensure their child's academic success. Vacations during the school term require pre-approval. A vacation pre-approval form must be submitted to the superintendent's office. These days count towards a student's absence record and are therefore discouraged. Approval may be denied for students who are failing, have excessive absences, and/or for vacations exceeding 5 days.
- **Excused absence and missed work:** The number of days allowed for makeup school work will be equal to the number of days a student was consecutively absent. Students who are seriously ill and will be out a significant amount of time should have a parent contact the guidance office in order to make arrangements to obtain school work. Students who are illegally absent or unexcused from school will not have the opportunity to make up assignments/assessments that were missed for credit and will receive a zero for any such assignment.

Tardiness:

- To participate in after-school activities, students must arrive at school on time on the day of the event, unless a doctor's excuse is provided. Unusual circumstances will be handled at the discretion of the administration.
- Students must report to the registration table when reporting late and will be directed to the attendance office/television studio.
- The student will be sent to class at the discretion of the administration.
- Unexcused tardy minutes will accumulate. Once a student accumulates (60) unexcused minutes, those minutes will equate to a ½ day unexcused absence.
- Upon reaching the 5th unexcused absence due to tardiness, the student will receive a detention. This rule also applies to students who provide their own transportation to and from the Northumberland County Career & Technology center (NCCTC). (Board Policy)
- Any subsequent unexcused absences due to tardiness will result in detention, in-school suspension, and/or parental/guardian meeting. The district also reserves the right to revoke a student's permission to provide their own transportation to and from the NCCTC due to excessive tardiness.

Important Notes:

- **Students will be assessed a quarter-day or half-day absence depending on when they enter and/or leave the building. Administration will use discretion when applying quarter-day or half-day absences depending on the reasoning and need for the absence.**

REGULAR BELL SCHEDULE

- Students may not enter the building until 7:15 am. Students must be present in their homeroom by 7:35am. AM vo-tech students should enter the building no later than 10:25am.

LUNCH A

	<u>Start</u>	<u>End</u>	<u>Minutes</u>
First Bell	7:30		
Warning Bell	7:34		
1st Period	7:35	8:25	50
2nd Period	8:28	9:07	39
3rd Period	9:10	9:49	39
4th Period	9:52	10:31	39
Lunch A	10:34	11:04	30
5th Period (5B)	11:07	11:46	39
6th Period (6B)	11:49	12:28	39
7th Period	12:31	1:10	39
8th Period	1:13	1:52	39
Activity Period	1:55	2:20	25
Plan	2:20	2:59	39

LUNCH B

	<u>Start</u>	<u>End</u>	<u>Minutes</u>
First Bell	7:30		
Warning Bell	7:34		
1st Period	7:35	8:25	50
2nd Period	8:28	9:07	39
3rd Period	9:10	9:49	39
4th Period	9:52	10:31	39
5th Period (5A)	10:34	11:13	39
Lunch B	11:16	11:46	30
6th Period (6B)	11:49	12:28	39
7th Period	12:31	1:10	39
8th Period	1:13	1:52	39
Activity Period	1:55	2:20	25
Plan	2:20	2:59	39

LUNCH C

	<u>Start</u>	<u>End</u>	<u>Minutes</u>
First Bell	7:30		
Warning Bell	7:34		
1st Period	7:35	8:25	50
2nd Period	8:28	9:07	39
3rd Period	9:10	9:49	39
4th Period	9:52	10:31	39
5th Period (5A)	10:34	11:13	39
6th Period (6A)	11:16	11:55	39
Lunch C	11:58	12:28	30
7th Period	12:31	1:10	39
8th Period	1:13	1:52	39
Activity Period	1:55	2:20	25
Plan	2:20	2:59	39

BULLYING

The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students. The Board recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Board prohibits bullying by district students.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantially interfering with a student's education.
2. Creating a threatening environment.
3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school day.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

Complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district's legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying.

Please refer to [District Policy 249](#) for a further definition of bullying.

What to Do When You Experience or See Bullying

The intent of our high school is to eliminate bullying altogether, but at times, it still occurs. Should a student feel bullied or witness bullying, he/she should immediately report it to a teacher, administrator, or any adult in the building and fill out an [Incident Report](#). The form can be found in the main office or on the district website at www.mca.k12.pa.us. The district employee will ensure that the matter is addressed and or the principals are made aware of the situation.

Consequences for Violations of Policy

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include:

1. Counseling within the school
2. Completion of "Teaching Social Skills to Youth" writing prompt which will include response to "Be the Change" video.
3. Parental conference
4. Lunch and/or after-school detention
5. Loss of school privileges and/or ISS
6. Schedule change
7. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities
8. Suspension
9. Expulsion

HAZING

Within MCA School District Policy 247:

Hazing is not an accepted practice by the Mount Carmel Area School District and will not be tolerated or condoned in any athletic program, club, or organization. The respective school administrator and athletic director will deal with any instances of hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational and athletic goals of the district and are prohibited at all times.

Hazing is defined as an act when a person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting, or affiliating a student with an organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing membership or status in an organization, causes, coerces or forces a student to do any of the following:[\[1\]](#)

1. Violate federal or state criminal law.
2. Consume any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug, or other substance which subjects the student to a risk of emotional or physical harm.
3. Endure brutality of a physical nature, including whipping, beating, branding, calisthenics, or exposure to the elements.
4. Endure brutality of a mental nature, including activity adversely affecting the mental health or dignity of the individual, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment.
5. Endure brutality of a sexual nature.
6. Endure any other activity that creates a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to the student.

More egregious acts of Hazing are defined as Aggravated Hazing and are included in the MCASD Board Policy 247.

- Each athlete or student involved in any extracurricular activity or club will complete the following course on the National Federation of High School Sports website before participating in any sport or extra curricular club at MCA each school year. This course needs to be completed once per year and does not need to be completed multiple times if the student participates in multiple sports:

“Hazing Prevention for Students”

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/hazing-prevention-for-students>

Each athlete will email or print their completed course certificate to their head coach. It is the responsibility of the head coach to track completion and notify the athletic director of team completion.

CAFE TRAC

Please follow the steps listed below if you are a recently graduated student or moved out of the district and are seeking a refund from your Cafe Trac account:

Parent/guardian should email shearnl@mca.k12.pa.us and include the following information:

- Student Name
- Student school last attended
- Relationship to student
- Name and address to send refund

If you have a student who has graduated or moved out of district and would like to transfer the balance to a sibling or give as a donation please follow these steps:

Parent/guardian should email shearnl@mca.k12.pa.us and include the following information:

- Both Students Names
- Student School last attended
- Amount of transfer/donation
- Relationship to student

CELL PHONES (ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY)

Students should store their cell phones in their locker during the school day. They are prohibited in the classroom or any educational setting between 7:30am-2:20pm.

Cell phone use is permitted only in non-education settings such as:

- * Lunch
- * Study halls
- * In the hallways during passing of classes

The following expectations apply (even in non-educational settings):

- Cell phones are prohibited, should not be visible, and stored in lockers during educational times. Any cell phone that is visible in an educational setting will result in a cell phone infraction. Checking the time or a text message is **NOT** an acceptable reason to access a phone during class.
- At **NO** time can a student use their cell phone to take a picture or video without specific permission from a teacher or administrator.
- At **NO** time should audio from a cell phone be heard during class, study hall, or lunch. Cell phones must be set to “silent” and the volume should remain off even in non-educational settings. Students granted permission to leave classes or lunch are **NOT** permitted to use their cell phones during that time.
- At **NO** time should cellphones be used during in-school suspension (ISS), detention, or any other disciplinary setting.
- Voice calls are **NOT** permitted in any setting. Any student who feels the need to make a voice call should ask for permission in the main office.
- Cell phones are not to be used in restrooms, locker rooms, or other areas where privacy is expected. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in an electronic device violation.
- Music devices (iPods, MP3 Players, earbuds, etc) and fidget spinners also fall under the Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy. Earbuds and headphones are **NOT** permitted during school hours. Fidget Spinners are **NOT** permitted during school hours.
- Parents and students are reminded that the intent of this policy is not to limit contact among family members. Parents may call the school’s main office to have important messages forwarded to their children. Students may also, with permission, utilize the office phone or their own cell phone to make a call while in the main office.

Violations of the above conditions will result in a confiscation of the cell phone by an adult. Students are expected to comply. **Failure to relinquish the phone will result in disciplinary action, including possible suspension.** A confiscated cell phone will be locked in an administrator's office & the following disciplinary action will be taken:

First Offense: A verbal warning will be given. A parent will be contacted and the cell phone/personal electronic device will be returned to the student at the end of the day.

Second Offense: The student will receive an after-school detention. A parent will be contacted and the cell phone/personal electronic device will be returned to the student at the end of the day.

Third Offense: The third offense constitutes "defiance of authority" and will result in an in-school suspension (ISS). A parent will be contacted and will be required to enter the school building to pick-up the cell phone/personal electronic device. Further discipline may be imposed at the discretion of the administration, which may include revoking electronic device usage for the remainder of the school year.

The district is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged cell phones or personal electronic devices.

COMPUTER/INTERNET USAGE

The district requires parents and students to sign a Computer/Internet Policy which defines the rules and regulations for technology usage. Students will be disciplined accordingly if they abuse this privilege; school computer usage may be compromised if the policy is violated.

DATING VIOLENCE (POLICY 252)

The Board encourages students who have been subjected to dating violence to promptly report such incidents. When a student believes he or she has been subject to dating violence, the student is encouraged to promptly report the incident, orally or in writing, to the building principal, guidance counselor, or a classroom teacher. Please see school board policy 252.

DISCIPLINE

Depending on the severity of or type, the following infractions can result in lunch or after-school detentions, in-school, or out-of-school suspension. After school detention is held **Monday – Thursday, 2:30 – 3:30 pm**. A parent conference with a district administrator, teacher, or staff member may be held because of repeated violations of the following infractions:

Category Level 1 (Classroom Level) Infractions:

- Abuse of lavatory/hallway privilege
- Abuse of parking privilege
- Bullying (put downs)
- Classroom or cafeteria disturbance
- Defiance/disrespect/dishonesty
- Idling/off-Task
- Entering hallways without a pass
- Hallway disturbance
- Inappropriate language or gestures

- Misconduct/disturbance in school, on school property, or at school-related activities
- Misuse of a locker or sharing locker combinations
- Public display of affection or physical contact
- Unauthorized use of electronic devices during the school day
- Unexcused lateness to class
- Unauthorized food or drink

** Fidget spinners are not allowed (School will follow the same guidelines as electronic device consequence sequence)*

More serious infractions, listed below, could result in after-school detention, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension. An initial suspension can be from (1) to (3) days, depending on the severity of the offense. Subsequent suspensions have escalating consequences. Students are responsible for any missed work or assignments. Any suspension of more than (3) days will require an informal hearing with a district administrator.

Category Level 2 (Office Managed) Infractions:

- Abusive language, gestures, or displays (*or continued Level 1 bullying*)
- Skipping class/ detention
- Continued cafeteria disturbance
- Cheating/plagiarism/forgery
- Repeated classroom disturbance
- Continuous violation of the Dress Code or Electronic Device Policy
- Defiance of authority
- Leaving class or school without permission
- Not signing in when tardy
- Verbal abuse
- Willful fighting
- Continued tardiness to class
- Bus misconduct
- Sharing an enclosed bathroom stall with another student
- Any continued or repeated Level 1 infractions

More serious violations, listed below, represent a violation of the law. In such cases, students are subject to civil and/or criminal penalties, as well as a suspension of up to (10) days from the school for the first offense. A recommendation for expulsion will occur for possession of drugs or weapons, or for an assault of an employee. Expulsion is the permanent removal of a student from the school system by the Board of Education. A hearing with the board must be held prior to expulsion.

Category Level 3 (Office Managed) Infractions:

- Possession/use/under the influence of a controlled substance during school hours or “look-alike” substance (**See Board Policy 227**)
- arson, false alarms
- Threats either made in person, written, or electronic. See below for more information on threats. (may require a threat assessment and/or medical evaluation before the student is eligible to return to school)
- Commission of an act punishable under the state crime code
- Damaging school or student property

- Extortion
- Physical assault
- Possession of a weapon or look-alike weapon
- Possession or use of a tobacco product on school property or at a school event. **Please see Board Policy 222** for definitions of “tobacco.” (Vapor pens, cartridges, pods, lighters, and nicotine and matches all fall under this policy and are not allowed.) See below for specific details on consequences for Policy 222. (Conflicting consequences)
- Theft
- Unlawful harassment
- Vandalism

Discipline consequences are progressive, therefore, students will receive a greater consequence after multiple offenses which include the same behavior. For example, a student’s first offense of a specific behavior, may result in 1 day of OSS, whereas a second offense may result in 3 days OSS, and a third offense may result in 5 days OSS. The severity of the initial consequence depends on the level of infraction.

Progressive discipline is also in place for students who receive consequences for incidents that do not include the same behavior. The discipline consequences for each student is tracked & becomes progressive after reaching the thresholds listed below:

After serving 3 total detentions in a single marking period, any additional detentions assigned will result in in-school suspension (ISS).

After serving 3 total days of ISS in a single marking period, any additional days of ISS will result in out-of-school suspension (OSS). .

Students who receive 10 or more days of OSS in a single school year may be recommended for expulsion.

In a continued effort to maintain a safe learning environment for all students and staff, each incident relating to potential threats, either made in person, written, or made electronically, will be fully investigated by school administration. The Mount Carmel Area School District expects all parents and guardians to discuss with their children the seriousness of making any type of threat. Consequences may include suspension/expulsion from school and will include a threat assessment conducted by school staff, school resource officer, or local police and/or mental health evaluation by the school psychologist or outside mental health professional before returning to school. Students are often reminded that “I was only kidding” can not be taken as an excuse for such behavior.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to access the FBI website at <http://fbi.gov> and review the #ThinkBeforeYouPost campaign for more information and valuable tips on how to discuss social media with your child.

**** Section 1317.2(g) of the Pennsylvania Public School Code defines a weapon as “any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.”*

**** Notes Title 18 of the PA General Assembly Crime Code (6306.1) Use of tobacco products in schools prohibited:*

- (a) pupils -- a pupil commits a summary offense if the pupil possessed or uses a tobacco product:*
- (1) in a school building*
 - (2) on a school bus or other vehicle owned by, leased by or under the control of a school district.*

Tobacco and vaping products possession (Student has possession of any of the products mentioned above.)

DISSEMINATION OF MATERIALS

The right of public school students' to freedom of speech is guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and the constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Board respects the right of students to express themselves in word or symbol and to disseminate non-school materials to others as a part of that expression. The Board also recognizes that the exercise of that right is not unlimited and must be balanced with the district's responsibility to maintain a safe and orderly school environment and to protect the rights of all members of the school community.

Board Policy 220 addresses student expression in general as well as dissemination of expressive materials that are not part of district-sponsored activities (non-school materials).

The policy does not apply to materials sought to be disseminated as part of the curricular or extracurricular programs of the district, which shall be regulated separately as part of the school district's educational program.

The Board requires that students who wish to disseminate non-school materials on school property shall obtain approval by submitting them at least one (1) school day in advance to the building principal or designee, who shall forward a copy to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent shall assist the building principal in determining the designation of the places and times non-school materials may be disseminated in each school building. Such designations may take into account maintenance of the flow of student traffic throughout the school and shall limit dissemination of non-school materials to non-instructional times.

When student dissemination of non-school materials or other student expression violates this policy, the building principal may determine what if any disciplinary or other consequences should be imposed. Disciplinary actions shall be in accordance with applicable Board policy and the Code of Student Conduct.

DRESS CODE

Students are required to be dressed according to the Mount Carmel Area Dress Code Policy 221. Please see below for general guidelines of policy 221.

1. General Guidelines:

The following items are prohibited:

- Leggings
- Spandex
- Yoga Pants
- Denim Blue Jeans
- Sweatpants or Wind Pants
- Any type of clothing or pants that are distressed, has holes, tears and/or rips– even if they are purchased with these characteristics. (See #11 Below)

Our district looks for certain characteristics to define what are considered acceptable “pants.” Pants must have **one or more of the following** *to be defined as such*:

- Back Pockets
- Front Pockets
- Front Zipper
- Belt Loops

*Cargo side pockets are not permitted.

**Side leg cell phone pockets are not permitted.

****Elementary students can wear sweatpants or athletic shorts on physical education days.*

2. Casual athletic and workout type clothing is not permitted.

The following items should NOT be worn:

- Sweatpants
- Athletic pants and shorts
- Warm-up pants
- Any pants or shorts made from sweatpant material
- The items listed above are permitted on physical education days at the elementary school.

2. Any solid color long or short sleeve golf shirt, button down dress shirt, crew neck, V-neck with or without approved school logo may be worn (No tank tops or midriff tops that expose the skin).

3. Slacks, shorts, skorts, skirts, dresses, and jumpers of any solid color are allowed and must rest on the student’s hip. Only solid stockings can be worn (i.e. fishnet stockings and/or stockings with holes are prohibited). Slacks and shorts cannot be baggy, low rise, or cargo style.

NEW: Staff will use the following guidelines to determine proper length: Shorts, skirts, or dresses may be worn if they are equal to or longer than the length of the student’s longest finger-tip when the shoulders, arms, hands, and fingers are in a normal, relaxed hanging position by the sides of the their body. The item should be resting on the hip of the student, not below, when being measured. This standard shall be used to determine the appropriate length of the shorts, skirts, or dresses, but should be applied in consideration of a student’s physical stature.

4. Any MCA shirts or sweatshirts without hoods of any kind are permitted, but must include MCA, Mount Carmel Area, or a Tornado Logo.

5. MCA shirts or sweatshirts without hoods can also be worn that represent an MCA athletic team, club, or activity. Shirts from NCCTC are permitted.

6. Hooded shirts of any kind are prohibited.

7. Hats, bandanas, headbands, gloves, chains, and belts with protruding pointed studs, are not permitted.

8. Studded jewelry or studded accessories of any kind are prohibited.

9. **NEW:** 3x3 brand logos (ex: Nike, Adidas) are allowed on shorts, pants, and shirts. No other logo or image is

allowed on these items except for MCA school related items. Please refer to the school website listed below for more details. ***Yes, we will be measuring to determine if logos meet the 3x3 inch requirement. Please be advised when school shopping.***

10. Open-toed footwear (sandals, slides) and/or open-heeled footwear (bedroom slippers) of any kind **are prohibited.**

11. **NEW:** No holes, rips, or tears of any kind are permitted in pants or other clothing items even if the item was purchased with these characteristics.

12. Jeans are not permitted on gym days at the elementary school.

13. Corduroy is permitted.

14. Leather clothing is not permitted.

15. No shoulder bags of any shape or size are permitted.

16. Wristlets no more than 5 inches x 8 inches may be carried.

17. Underclothing is not permitted to be seen through outer clothing.

18. See-through clothing is not permitted.

19. Gloves or outerwear coats are not permitted in school unless approved by the principal due to temperature in the classroom.

20. Any clothing items must be reviewed and approved by the administration before they are advertised, sold, or worn as dress code approved apparel.

New students entering the district shall be granted a grace period of **1 week** before being required to conform with the dress code.

Principals can use their discretion to designate specific days that permit students to wear other types of clothing.

Students coming to school in violation of the dress code & changing after being reported to the administration will upon the first offense: receive a warning & call home, second offense: lunch detention & call home, third offense: parent meeting & after school detention. Subsequent offense will result in possible suspension.

Students who purposely report to school out of dress code when serving in-school suspension may be asked to change or receive an additional consequence.

The following are prohibited even on **dress down days**:

1. Hooded shirts of any kind.

2. Baggy, low rise, or cargo style slacks or shorts.
3. Leggings or yoga pants.
4. Pajama pants.
5. Shorts, skirts, skorts, or dresses that do not meet the proper length requirements.
6. Tank tops or midriff tops that expose the skin.
7. Hats, headbands, bandanas, gloves, chains, and belts with protruding pointed studs.
8. Studded jewelry or studded accessories of any kind.
9. Open-toed footwear (sandals, slides) or open-heeled footwear (bedroom slippers).
10. Holes, rips, or tears on any clothing item even if it was purchased with these characteristics.
11. Leather clothing.
12. See-through clothing or underclothing that can be seen through outer clothing.
13. Fishnet, ripped, or non-solid stockings.
14. Clothing with offensive statements or logos deemed inappropriate by the administration or that causes an undue disruption to the learning environment.

Jeans, athletic clothing, and clothing with logos are all permitted on dress down days as long as they are not in violation of another existing rule. (Ex. mutilation, etc.)

Any student who violates the dress code/school standard dress code policy shall be subject to the following:

First offense: Notify parent/guardian and have them bring in dress code appropriate clothing to change into. The student will remain in the In-School Suspension (ISS) room until proper attire is provided.

Second offense: Parent/Guardian meeting is required. The student will remain in the ISS room and be assigned detention.

Third offense: Parent/Guardian meeting required. out-of-school suspensions (OSS) will occur.

Repeated violations of the standard dress code shall be treated as disruptive behavior as noted in the discipline policy.

Please visit the Mount Carmel Area School District website & click on the 'New 2024-2025 Dress Code Information' link listed under 'News & Events' for more information.

https://www.mca.k12.pa.us/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/2024-2025_dress_code.pdf

DROP/ADD POLICY

Written permission must be received from the following:

1. Guidance counselor.
2. The student's parents.
3. Teacher whose class the student is dropping.
4. Teacher whose class the student is entering.

Week 3 through the end of 1st Marking Period: The student must put a request in writing stating why he or she

is requesting to be moved to a different course. A committee will then review the request. Following the review, a meeting will be held with the committee, the student, and parent/guardian.

Should approval be granted by the committee to move the student into a different course, the student will be given a withdrawal (W) for the first four weeks of school.

Weeks 5 through 9: Should approval be granted by the committee to move the student into a different course, the student will be given a withdrawal (W) for the final grade and a pass (P) or fail (F) for all remaining marking period grades. A failing (F) grade in any course will keep a student off the honor roll.

SCHEDULE CHANGES WILL NOT BE PERMITTED AFTER THE FIRST MARKING PERIOD.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS/MESSAGES

If schools must be closed due to inclement weather, an all-call will go out to families listed in our system. In addition the local radio stations will be asked to make announcements. Postings can also be viewed on local television stations, home web-pages, and social media sites (MCA District Facebook and Twitter @MCAEducation and Junior-Senior High Twitter @MCAJrSrHigh and Instagram @mcajr.sr.high.)

The School District has recently updated its emergency contact system with **ALERT NOW**. Parents will continue to receive automated phone calls alerting them of any type of emergency message. To ensure the accuracy of the new notification system, it is critical that home and/or cell numbers be updated and accurate.

FIELD TRIPS

Students need to be granted permission in order to attend a field trip. A student may be denied from attending a trip based on the academic standing, attendance record, or discipline record. Parents should ensure students are approved for trips prior to paying any sort of fee. Guidelines are as follows:

Academic Standing

- Students must receive permission from each of his/her teachers prior to participating in a field trip (when the field trip will result in missing that teacher's class).
- Signed approval from a teacher indicates the student is in good academic standing in their class.
- The student is responsible for making up all missed assignments according to the 'Attendance-Excused Absences & Missed Work' section in the student handbook.
- In the event a teacher denies a request by a student to attend a field trip, it will be reviewed by an administrator.

Attendance

- The attendance office must provide permission for all students to attend a field trip based on the student's attendance record.
- Students who have accumulated more than (3) unexcused absences, (10) excused absences, or (60) minutes of unexcused tardiness may be denied from participating in a field trip.

Discipline

- The building principal will review a student's discipline record and must provide approval prior to any student attending a field trip.
- Students who have received an out-of-school suspension, or have accumulated multiple in-school suspensions may be denied from participating in a field trip.

FUNDRAISING

Prior to approval, fundraiser forms must be completed and approved by a building principal or athletic director. All monies should be turned in to the activity advisor by check. Cash will not be accepted. Any outstanding fundraising money due will be turned over to the district magistrate. [The activity fundraising form can be found on our district website.](#)

GRADING SYSTEM / GRADUATION/ HONOR ROLL/ REPORT CARDS

Numerical grades are placed on report cards for each marking period. These grades correspond to the marking system listed below. Permanent record grades are recorded numerically.

A	90-100	<i>Excellent</i>	Honor Roll	
B	80-89	<i>Good</i>	Distinguished Honors	95-100
C	70-79	<i>Average</i>	1st Honors	90-94
D	65-69	<i>Poor</i>	2nd Honors	85-89
F	0-64	<i>Failure</i>		

- In addition to the letter and number grades as noted, "pass/fail" grades may be given when applicable.
- **Students earning a 69% or lower in any course will disqualify the student from honor roll status.**
- Any parent wishing to schedule a conference must contact the guidance office. Teachers are not available during instructional time.
- Parents can access homework assignments and grades for their child through SIS. If you need to set up a user account, please contact the Technology Resources Office @339-1500 ext. 3152.
- Student progress reports will be posted on SIS (Student Information System) near the midpoint of each marking period.
- Report cards are posted to SIS quarterly (every 9 weeks) throughout the year to inform parents of their child's progress. Paper copies are available by request in the high school office.
- Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled by teachers as needed.
- Mid-Term exams are worth (10%) and Final Exams are worth (10%) of the final course grade.
- Each marking period grade is worth 20% of the final course grade.

Requirements:

24 credits are needed for graduation. *Only credits acquired in grades 9 through 12 are counted for graduation and GPA requirements.*

Class Ranking:

Cumulative weighted averages are calculated at the end of each school year. Please keep in mind that marking period averages reflect courses that are "in progress". Class ranking will be provided upon request at the conclusion of each school year. (This ranking can and will fluctuate often.) Senior class rankings are available mid-year and on Class Night. Dual Enrollment Classes (ie ACE and LCCC) will count towards GPA and Class Rank.

Honor Cords:

Honor Cords will be presented to all graduating seniors who are members of the National Honor Society. The requirements to gain entrance to the National Honor Society are listed on page 18.

Early College Program

The Mount Carmel Area School District offers eligible students the opportunity to participate in an Early College Program to earn dual-enrollment credits through Commonwealth University and or Luzerne County Community College. This Dual Enrollment opportunity is carefully planned with the assistance of the Mount Carmel Area Guidance Department. Interested students should contact the guidance office for specific information concerning graduation requirements, scheduling, fees and program eligibility.

- **Grades earned through the Early College Program (Fall and Spring semesters only) WILL be counted towards the students cumulative GPA and class rank.** See conversion scale below.
- Students are able to take additional courses in the summer or winter sessions at the discounted rate. Summer and/or winter classes can be used towards graduation requirements but WILL NOT be included in the student's cumulative GPA or class rank.
- The assigned student grade for successfully completed work shall be weighted at 1.12 and students will earn one high school credit per each three (3) credit college course. Courses must be approved through the guidance office.
- While in the Early College Program, students must maintain a 2.0 GPA or higher to remain in the program.
- If a student withdraws from a course after the university's DROP/ADD period, this will be recorded as a "W" on the student's academic record (transcript).

Dual Enrollment Conversion Scale

Letter Grade → Numerical Grade

A	→	100%
A-	→	94%
B+	→	91%
B	→	89%
B-	→	84%
C+	→	81%
C	→	79%
C-	→	74%
D+	→	71%
D	→	69%
D-	→	65%
F	→	64%

College and Career Ready:

To meet the requirements of the Pennsylvania College and Career Measures as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education students must produce college and career ready artifacts that will help guide the student's plans for after graduation. In addition to these artifacts, students will be expected to complete a work-based learning activity prior to the end of their junior year. Activities may include: job shadowing, internships, cooperative education programs, career mentoring, community based work programs, service learning (unpaid)

and volunteering. More information on acceptable work-based learning activities will be provided by the guidance office. The work-based learning activity can be completed in conjunction with the students' senior project.

Job shadowing is now a graduation requirement for all students. Families (with the student involved) will be responsible for making the necessary arrangements to set up the student's job shadowing experience. If you are having difficulty finding a suitable placement for your child, please contact the Guidance Office.

Senior Projects:

Each student will complete a project in one or more areas of concentrated study under the guidance of the high school faculty. The purpose of the student project is to assure attainment of skills in application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information, and the communication of significant knowledge and understanding. Projects may be completed by individuals or groups of no more than four members. All criteria for this project are defined in the district Senior Project Packet which can be picked up in the high school office.

PDE Pathways to Graduation

In accordance with Act 158, statewide graduation requirements took effect with the class of 2022. Act 158 provides five options for meeting graduation requirements: (1) Keystone Proficiency Pathway, (2) Keystone Composite Pathway, (3) Alternate Assessment Pathway, (4) Evidence-Based Pathway, and (5) Career and Technical Education Pathway. (The first two pathways are based solely on Keystone Exam scores.)

Details on each pathway are as follows:

- 1) Keystone Proficiency Pathway: Scoring proficient or advanced on each Keystone Exam - Algebra I, Literature, and Biology.
- 2) Keystone Composite Pathway: Earning a satisfactory composite score on the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams. The passing composite score was made available in August of 2019.
- 3) Alternate Assessment Pathway: Earning a passing grade on the courses associated with each Keystone Exam, and satisfactorily complete one of the following: an alternative assessment (SAT, PSAT, ACT, ASVAB, Gold Level ACT WorkKeys), advanced coursework (AP, IB, concurrent enrollment courses), pre-apprenticeship, or acceptance in a 4-year nonprofit institution of higher education for college-level coursework.
- 4) Evidence-Based Pathway: Earning a passing grade on the courses associated with each Keystone Exam, and passing the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) or the National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) assessment in an approved Career and Technical Education concentration.
- 5) Career & Technical Education Pathway: Earning a passing grade on the courses associated with each Keystone Exam, and demonstrating readiness for postsecondary engagement through three pieces of evidence from the student's career portfolio aligned to student goals and career plan. Examples of evidence will include ACT WorkKeys, SAT Subject tests, AP, IB and concurrent coursework, higher education acceptance, community learning project, completion of an internship, externship, co-op, or full-time employment.

Retention:

At the secondary level, a student may be considered for retention if he/she is failing (2) major subjects: reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science, for the year and has not been retained already in that grade. At the Junior-High level, students that fail three or more credits may have to repeat the school year. (Math and ELA count as double credits.) All parental requests for retention recommendations must be made by May 15th. Parental requests must come in writing and supported in writing by an independent evaluation or a physician's recommendation.

HONOR SOCIETY

National Honor Society Eligibility Requirements

In order to become a member and officially inducted into the National Honor Society in 10th grade, a student must meet the scholarship, leadership, service, and character requirements described below:

- Must attain/maintain a truncated 93 cumulative average
- Must demonstrate leadership by participating in at least two extracurricular activities (in or out of school)
- Must complete at least 15 hours of community service
- Must meet character requirements in faculty evaluations
- A student must not be involved in any major discipline issues. A student should not have any out-of-school suspensions within the induction period. Any other minor, but repetitive discipline concerns brought to the attention of the NHS advisors will be reviewed by the Faculty Council. The administration and/or Faculty Council reserves the right to review and render the final decision on discipline issues on a case-by-case basis.

National Junior Honor Society Requirements

- A student must have a GPA of 93 or higher at the end of the previous school year.
- A student must not be involved in any major discipline issues. A student should not have any out of school suspensions within the induction period. Any other minor, but repetitive discipline concerns brought to the attention of the NHS advisors will be reviewed by the Faculty Council. The administration and/or Faculty Council reserves the right to review and render the final decision on discipline issues on a case-by-case basis.

Please note:

- The induction period ends with the second marking period of the current school year.
- Students transferring to the district after this time will be eligible for the following year's induction.
- TELA and homeschool students are eligible for induction into honor societies. However, since they are not ranked they cannot be officers.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The Junior-Senior High School has two guidance counselors to advise students on careers and academics. In addition, counselors are available to students for personal problems. If parents would like to schedule an appointment with a counselor you may call 339-1500, ext. 3122 or 3123.

HOMELESS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110, Subtitle B) was enacted to make sure homeless youth have access to appropriate education while removing barriers that homeless children face. The Act defines the term "homeless children and youth" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Its goal is to minimize interruptions to the education of homeless youth. The Mount Carmel Area School District is committed to working collaboratively with families and local agencies to support homeless youth in our school community. Please see the district website for more information or contact Carole Lubeskie, Homeless Liaison, at 570-339-1500 ext. 3147.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In compliance with state and federal law, the Mount Carmel Area School District will provide services to each protected student with a disability, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, as follows: those related aids, services or accommodations needed to provide the student with an equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extra-curricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the

student's abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in, or access to, an aspect of the school program.

These services and protections for students with disabilities are different from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled or seeking enrollment in special education programs.

For more information on the evaluation procedures and provisions of service for protected handicapped students, contact the school psychologist at 339-1500 ext 3169.

HOMEBOUND EDUCATION

Students who are severely ill and require homebound education, as defined by a physician, will be provided five hours of instruction per week. Report cards will note modified curricula if the time period is excessive. Students with excessive homebound instruction will not be included in the class rankings. Students on homebound instruction cannot work, participate in sports, or attend school functions unless approved by the superintendent.

LOCKERS

Lockers are loaned to each student at the high school. Lockers are to be used to store school-related items. It is the student's responsibility to maintain clean lockers. Students are not permitted to share lockers nor should they share their combinations with friends. Students sharing their locker with another student may be subject to a school consequence. School authorities have the right to search a student locker when there is reasonable suspicion related to threat of safety, health, or welfare to students of the school.

LOST AND FOUND

Personal property should be labeled. Please turn in any recovered textbooks, workbooks, notebooks, and articles of clothing, etc. to the office. Students who misplace one of the above should check with the office. Students will be responsible to pay for lost/ damaged school items prior to obtaining their final report card.

METAL DETECTOR OPERATION FOR MOUNT CARMEL AREA JR.-SR. HIGH SCHOOL

The Board recognizes that the educational environment of the schools is an important factor in the student's ability to learn and a teacher to teach. Weapons and drugs in the schools, or on school grounds, present a clear danger to the learning environment. By conducting random metal detector searches, it is the hope and desire of the Board to foster a proper educational environment for all students and to help promote the safety and welfare of students, staff, and visitors by authorizing Mount Carmel Area School District to conduct metal detector screenings of anyone entering the Jr.-Sr. High School building daily.

Searches are conducted for the district's purposes and not for the primary purpose of gathering evidence or instituting criminal proceedings; however, if a weapon and/or illegal item(s) are found, the appropriate law enforcement authorities shall be notified and the student or adult with a weapon and/or illegal items(s) shall face the penalties set forth in the Board policies and State laws.

In conjunction with using the metal detectors, school personnel may inspect the contents of any backpack, book bag, purse, or parcel for the limited purpose of determining whether a weapon is concealed therein, in accordance with Board policy. In the event a further search is necessary, the student and/or visitor will be removed to a private location. In cases involving students, a parent and guardian will be called prior to continuing the search. The parent/guardian will be given the option to be present for extended search, unless school staff believes immediate danger to the safety of students exists. A student and/or visitor can be refused admittance for refusing to follow

metal detector operation protocol.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY CAREER AND TECHNICAL CENTER

Students in the Mount Carmel Area School District are able to attend the Northumberland County Career and Technology Center beginning in 10th grade. Two options exist for students to attend the Northumberland County CTC. Students can attend either half days in grades 10, 11, and 12 or for a full day in grade 12. A variety of shop choices are provided in order to meet the needs of individual students.

Prior to scheduling classes at the Northumberland County CTC, all students must meet with the Guidance Department to confirm they have met all academic credit requirements necessary for graduation.

Students who elect to **drive or are passengers** to and from NCCTC must have signed permission forms on file in the Principal's Office. For more information on course offerings at the NCCTC please visit www.mca.k12.pa.us or <https://www.ncavts.org/>. The district reserves the right to suspend a student's right to provide personal transportation in the event they abuse the privilege. (Example: excessive tardies arriving from the NCCTC)

PEST MANAGEMENT

The Mount Carmel Area School District utilizes the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach for managing insects, rodents, and weeds. Buildings and grounds are routinely monitored to detect any pests that are present throughout the school.

Occasionally it may be necessary to use chemicals to manage a pest problem. These materials will only be used when necessary and will not be routinely applied. The school district will contract with a pest management company to perform services on site. Pesticides will not be applied during school hours and notices will be posted 72 hours prior to applications and for 48 hours following the application.

Parents or guardians of students may request prior notification of specific pesticide applications that will be made at the school. To receive notification you must be placed on the school notification registry. If you would like to be placed on the registry, please notify the school in writing. You may include your email address if you would like to be notified electronically. Each year the district will prepare a new notification registry.

If a material application must be made to control an emergency pest problem (stinging insects), notice will be provided by telephone to any parent or guardian who has requested such notification in writing. Exemptions to this notification include disinfectants and anti-microbial products; self-containerized baits placed in areas not accessible to students, and gel type baits placed in cracks, crevices, or voids; and swimming pool maintenance chemicals. If you have any questions, please contact Frank Brosh, IPM Coordinator, at the Mount Carmel Area Elementary School: Phone: 339-1500, ext. 3170.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students must successfully complete the state requirements of physical education to graduate. Students must dress and participate in all physical education classes. Gym lockers are provided to every student; students are required to use the gym lockers to secure their personal belongings. The school district is not responsible for lost and/or stolen personal property.

PLAGIARISM (BOARD POLICY 814.1)

Plagiarism is defined as:

- The unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work.
- The copying of another person's work, in print or electronic form, and representing that work as your own.
- Consistently and/or deliberately failing to document or cite sources.
- In-text documentation that is not reflected in the works cited.

First Degree:

- First offense- minor level of failure to document or cite.
- The student will be given a zero on the assignment with an opportunity to rewrite it for partial credit.
- Parent/ guardian notification.

Second Degree:

- Repeated first degree of offense; serious level of failure to document or cite.
- The student will be given a zero on the assignment with an opportunity to rewrite it for partial credit.
- Detention will be assigned.
- Parent/ guardian notification.

Third Degree:

- Repeated second degree offense; flagrant level of failure to document or cite.
- The student will be given a zero on the assignment.
- Suspension
- Parent/guardian notification

The use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) Programs can also be considered plagiarism. In order to prevent these practices teachers will:

- continue to use plagiarism detectors to reinforce the seriousness of originality and source crediting in student writing.
- regularly utilize multiple A.I. detectors to discourage the use of A.I. as a substitute for student writing whether in whole or in part.
- When warranted, use applications such as Google Draftback, to help establish student ownership of any given written work.
- Unless directly permitted under teacher guidance, treat student use of A.I. platforms to generate homework responses or complete written projects as plagiarism.

PSSA/KEYSTONE STATE ASSESSMENTS

Pennsylvania has adopted the Common Core State Standards (PA Core) as the academic standards to identify what a student should know and be able to do at varying grade levels. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is a state-led effort to establish a single set of clear educational standards for English-language arts (ELA) and Mathematics that states can share and voluntarily adopt. CCSS were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts, to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce. Individual student scores can be used to assist teachers in identifying students who may be in need of additional educational opportunities, and school scores provide information to schools and districts for curriculum and instruction improvement discussions and planning. TELA students are required to enter the building on testing dates to complete the appropriate testing.

Pennsylvania School of Student Assessment (PSSA)

The annual Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is a standards-based criterion referenced assessment used to measure a student's academic performance. Every Pennsylvania student in grades 3 through 8

is assessed in reading and math. Every Pennsylvania student in grades 5 and 8 are assessed in writing. Every Pennsylvania student in grades 4 and 8 is assessed in science. TELA students will be notified and are required to enter the building on testing dates to complete PSSA testing.

Keystone Exams

With the adoption of CCSS, Keystone Exams will serve as one component of Pennsylvania's new system of high school graduation requirements. The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to assess proficiency in the subject areas of Algebra I, Literature, English Composition, and Biology.

Students must demonstrate successful completion of secondary-level course work in Algebra I, Biology, and English Composition, in which the Keystone Exam serves as the final course exam. TELA students will be notified and are required to enter the building on testing dates to complete Keystone Testing.

PSSA Testing Window for 2024-2025

Assessment Dates Grades

English Language Arts: April 21- 25, 2025 Grades 3 - 8

Mathematics, Science, & ELA Makeups: April 28- May 2, 2025 Grades 3 - 8

Math & Science Makeups: May 5- May 8, 2025 Grades 4 and 8

KEYSTONE EXAM ADMINISTRATION

Winter:

Wave 1: December 4 - 18, 2024 Algebra I, Biology, Literature

Wave 2: January 6 - 17, 2025 Algebra I, Biology, Literature

Spring:

May 12 - 23, 2025 Algebra I, Biology, Literature

Summer:

July 28 to August 1, 2025 Algebra I, Biology, Literature

SCHOOL LUNCH/BREAKFAST PRICES

The Mount Carmel Area School District has implemented the Community Eligibility Program (CEP.) Your child/children will be eligible for FREE BREAKFAST and FREE LUNCH at school during the 2024-25 school year. Your child/children can participate in school breakfast and lunch without having to pay a fee or submit an application. No further action is required by you.

All meals will meet the federal and state guidelines. Students must take 3 of the 4 items (Fruit, Grain, Milk) offered at breakfast and one of those items MUST be a full ½ cup fruit. At lunch, students must take 3 of the 5 items (Protein, Fruit, vegetables, Grain, Milk) offered and 1 of those items MUST be a full ½ cup fruit or vegetable.

Students who wish to purchase an extra entrée, one of our snack options or just milk must pay for them.

This program does not apply to ala carte items and students must have money in their Caf-trac account in order to purchase them.

SCHOOL NURSE SERVICES

Illness During the Day

The school nurse is responsible only for the emergency care of injuries and sudden illness that occurs while the student is in school. The nurse is not available to diagnose or treat students who come to school with prior injuries or illnesses except in special cases that are under medical care and with the physician's written orders. If a student becomes ill during the school day, the student should report to the nurse's office. The school nurse makes a professional evaluation and will send your child home when necessary.

Only persons designated on the emergency form will be contacted to pick up the student. All telephone numbers must be recorded on the form and updated promptly when there are changes.

When contact is made to the parent/guardian for an illness/injury, the parent/guardian must come to the Nurse's Office to transport the student to his/her home, the doctor, or the hospital.

If a student is evaluated by the school nurse & is not sent home & the student calls a parent & the parent elects to sign them out of school it will be marked as an unexcused absence.

IMMUNIZATION

Pennsylvania Immunization Law requires students to be properly immunized according to their age and grade level. Please confer with your family physician to ensure immunizations are current and forward records to the school nurse.

INSURANCE

It is recommended that students purchase accident insurance. A school accident policy is available for a nominal fee. Forms will be distributed the first week of school and are also available in the principal's office.

LATEX-FREE

The Mount Carmel Area School District provides a latex-free environment to accommodate staff and students with severe allergies. Please note that this includes the presence of latex balloons in any part of the building.

MEDICATION

All medication should be given outside of school if possible. Most medications, even those scheduled for three times per day, can usually be given outside of school hours. The nurse's office does not have cough, cold, flu medication, allergy medications, or antibiotics.

School policy prohibits students from carrying on their person ANY medication that is prescribed or purchased as "over the counter." Students requiring oral medication during school hours may have the nurse administer such medication in compliance with the following regulations:

- All prescription and over-the-counter medication must be in the original container (State Law).
- Child's name, purpose of medication, time and dosage to be administered, possible side effects and termination date.
- Written instructions signed by the parent/guardian and physician.

Medication sent to school in baggies, unlabeled, or not in the original container will not be administered.

Respiratory inhalers are permitted to be carried and self-administered with a prescription from a physician. In

addition, an Asthma Action Plan, signed by the student's physician and parent, must be on file in the nurse's office. All inhalers must have a label on the inhaler or include the box prescription label. All "controlled medication:" Ritalin, Dexedrine, Concerta, Adderall, etc. must be brought to the nurse's office by the parent/guardian. Do not send these medications to school with your child. All controlled medications are counted by the nurse and locked in a secure cabinet.

The school nurse has standing orders from the school physician to dispense the following: acetaminophen, once a week to students with parent signed consent form on file; Tums; salt water for sore throats. Parents may come to the nurse's office to administer medication to their child, from the original medication container, if they so choose.

PHYSICALS

The school health law requires medical examinations for children upon original entry into school and in grades 6 and 11. Mount Carmel Area School District recommends that these examinations be done by your family physician since he/she can best evaluate your child's health and assist you in obtaining necessary treatments and corrections. Forms that must be completed by your physician may be obtained from the school nurse.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

Any student who does not return school property such as books, uniforms, and/or miscellaneous items will be required to pay for the missing items. Senior assessments must be paid by the designated due date. Report cards, diplomas, and schedules will be withheld until all items are returned or paid for.

SECURITY

A school Security Resource Officer is employed to maintain a safe and secure school environment. The SRO has the authority to issue citations when the situation warrants.

The Mt. Carmel Area School District utilizes surveillance cameras in its buildings, as well as on grounds and buses.

All campus traffic must abide by safety regulations established by the district.

High school students may **only** be dropped off in the parking lots. Cars are **not** permitted on the upper level.

Students are not permitted to carry backpacks from class to class. Any backpack must be placed in a students' locker throughout the school day. Items which are too large to fit in a student locker, such as athletic equipment, may be stored in the bag room across from the main office throughout the school day.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a group of teachers, support personnel and administrators who have been trained to work with at-risk students at the junior-high school level. At-risk behaviors include: drug and alcohol use and abuse, depression, suicide, eating disorders, pregnancy, physical and sexual abuse, any drastic change in a student's behavior, physical appearance or peer relationships.

SAP Team members for the 2024-2025 school year include:

SAP Coordinator: Mrs. Hannah Monger

Administration: Mr. John Darrah, *Principal*

Guidance Counselors: Mrs. Erica Nestico

Mrs. Christina Venna

School Nurse: Mrs. Erin Schwalm

Social Worker: Mrs. Carole Lubeskie

Teachers: Ms. Eve Lyash, Mr. Chris Olson, Mr. Chris Cunningham, Mrs. Kathryn Schauer, Ms. Alexandria Danilowicz, Mrs. Juanita McBride, Mrs. Kayleigh Rompolski, Mr. Brent Runge, Mrs. Tracy Rhodes

Outside Agencies:

Northumberland County MH: Mr. William Brecker

Northumberland County Drug & Alcohol: Mr. Kerry Davis, Ms. Lindsey Deepen

SBBH: Ms. Karen Rockwell

Any teacher, parent, student or community member can make a referral by speaking to a team member. Referrals may be anonymous.

STUDENT MOTIVATION

In order to improve student motivation the administration and teachers at the Junior-Senior High School will offer a reward activity at the end of each marking period for students who meet the following qualifications:

- No discipline referrals (including OSS, ISS, detention, and/or lunch detention)
- No unexcused tardies or absences
- No failing grades on their report card

The information above will be tracked and students who do not meet the criteria will be excluded from the activity and participate in a normal school day. Each student's record will reset each marking period. Activities will vary from one marking period to the next.

STUDENT RECORDS

Parents or legal guardians have the right to review official school records unless a court order is on file specifying otherwise. School policy prohibits the release of confidential student information to individuals or agencies outside the school staff without parental knowledge and consent. Parents/students should contact the principal's office to make an appointment to review records. Notarized guardianship documents need to be on file in the office.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Summer school options will be available for students who qualify. Students must attend/complete all sessions of summer school to receive credit. Family vacations are not excused absences and should be planned accordingly. Any cost associated with summer school classes will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian. For more information please contact the principal's office.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

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

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day of the request for access is made. Parents or eligible students should submit to the principal (or appropriate school official) written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements and notify the parent or eligible student of a time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request an amendment to the student's educational record when the parent or eligible student believes the record is inaccurate. Parents or eligible students should write to the principal or appropriate

school official, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested, 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.

- The right to consent to disclose personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist) or parent serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her task.

TORNADO eLEARNING ACADEMY (TELA)

TELA is a comprehensive K –12 curriculum delivered in an online format. In addition to providing individualized scheduling and pacing for students, the Tornado eLearning Academy is able to offer unique opportunities that are unavailable from other cyber charter schools.

- The Academy offers a fully blended approach to learning. All students have the opportunity to participate in any District run program such as vo-tech education, music, clubs, athletics, etc. Students are a part of the Mount Carmel Area community and have access to the opportunities afforded to students who attend our elementary and junior/senior high school.
- Students who graduate from the Tornado eLearning Academy will receive a Mount Carmel Area High School diploma and will be able to participate at commencement ceremonies with other members of the graduating class.
- A unique aspect of the Academy is our commitment to work in a collaborative partnership that allows prospective students and families to access the District's resources and services in a way that suits their individual needs.

For more information on TELA contact the athletic or guidance office.

TRANSPORTATION

Mount Carmel Area School District has a responsibility to provide safe, efficient transportation for all children. The following policies have been adopted to discourage disciplinary problems on district-owned or contracted buses. Drivers are responsible for maintaining control of students on or near their vehicles. Whenever problems arise that the driver is unable to resolve, the building principal will give assistance. A conduct report will be provided to the parents.

CATEGORY 1 violations which occur on or near the vehicle, will result in:

- 1st offense: conduct warning to parents
- 2nd offense: one to three day bus suspension
- 3rd offense: three to ten day bus suspension

CATEGORY 1 violations:

- Being rude, discourteous to, or distracting the driver
- Eating or drinking on the bus
- Excessive mischief
- Littering
- Unacceptable language
- Violation of safety procedures

CATEGORY 2 violations will result in:

- Automatic three-day bus suspension
- Possible extended bus suspension and/or permanent expulsion

CATEGORY 2 violations:

- Destruction of property
 - Fighting, pushing, tripping
 - Possession of tobacco products (probable arrest)
 - Serious violation of safety procedures
- * The Weapons Policy (218.1) adopted by the district will be followed.

Students must only ride on their assigned bus. Only in the case of extreme emergency or hardship will exceptions be made. Visiting friends after school is not an acceptable reason to change a bus assignment.

To request a valid change, a written note stating reasons for that change must be submitted to the building principal. The superintendent or designee must then grant approval. Please keep in mind that a written request does not mean approval.

All inquiries concerning transportation should be made to the superintendent's office @ 339-1500 ext. 3120.

Students traveling to the home school (as a passenger or driver in their own vehicle) from NCCTC must have completed transportation forms from their parent/guardian on file in the JH-SH office and NCCTC office.

Parents and students are asked to review school board policy 810.2. The Mt. Carmel Area School Board authorizes the use of video and audio recording on school buses and school vehicles for disciplinary and security purposes.

WALKERS AND DRIVING TO SCHOOL

Students who walk to school should enter the Sixth Street entrance and utilize the sidewalk for safety. Students who ride their bicycles to school should use the same entrance and park their bicycles in the rear of the high school in the bike rack. The principal recommends that all bicycles be locked to the bicycle rack during school hours. Skateboards, roller-blades, scooters, etc. are not permitted on school property. Students being dropped off at the high school must be dropped off in one of the parking lots. **Students may not be dropped off on the upper level where the buses enter and exit. No vehicles are permitted in the upper level driveway.**

Parking Passes

All students who drive to school must have a parking pass. All vehicles must be registered in the SRO's office. This process can be done on any school day during regular school hours. To obtain a parking pass, a student must provide a copy of his/her driver's license and current insurance and registration cards. In addition, he/she must supply the car model, make and plate number. Upon completed registration, the student will be issued a parking pass by the school security officer. The pass must be visible any time the vehicle is parked on campus.

TV STUDIO

The MCA TV Studio broadcasts live school news daily, 7:35 – 7:50 am. Rebroadcasts of community interest programs are aired every Wednesday from 8:00 – 11:00 pm. on channel 13.

VISITOR ID MANAGEMENT

Mount Carmel Area School District began using the **Raptor Visitor Management System** to track visitors, contractors, and volunteers in our schools. Safety of our students is our highest priority. Raptor will provide a consistent system to track visitors and volunteers while keeping away people who present a danger to students and staff members.

Upon entering a school building, **visitors** will be asked to present a valid state-issued ID, such as a driver's license. The ID will be scanned into the system. The Raptor system will check to ensure that registered sexual offenders are not entering our buildings. It is important to note that the Raptor system only scans the visitor's name, date of birth and photo for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. Additional visitor data from the driver's license is not gathered nor is the system connected to any other system such as the Department of Motor Vehicles. Therefore any other information on the ID is not scanned by the system and is not accessible to any of the users. Once entry is approved, Raptor will issue a badge that identifies the visitor, the date, and the purpose of his/her visit.



Parental Acknowledgement

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received the Mount Carmel Area School District 2024-2025 handbook. I have read, understand, and will comply with all district policies and procedures described in this handbook.

Parent (print name): _____

Parent email address (s): _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Student's Name: _____

In an effort to better prepare for possible unexpected school closure, please let us know if your household has the following:

_____ Household internet and wi-fi

Please sign and return this form to your child's homeroom teacher.