



**PLEASANT GARDENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
**2021-2022**

**100 John Roach Drive**  
**Marion NC 28752**

Web site: [pge.mcdowell.k12.nc.us](http://pge.mcdowell.k12.nc.us)

**Vision Statement**

*Pleasant Gardens Elementary: The School That Engages Minds*

**Mission Statement**

Pleasant Gardens Elementary provides the instructional building blocks for developing lifelong learners. Our engaging learning environment promotes critical thinking, problem solving, and an innovative mindset where students work collaboratively to improve the world around them. We encourage future focused student leaders that appreciate and celebrate the diversity of our school community.

**Our handbook is designed to inform you of the policies, procedures and expectations that you need to know for your child to be successful at Pleasant Gardens Elementary School. Please contact the school with any questions you may have.**

**Contact Information:**

**Principal**

Mrs. Melissa Elliott, Principal

**Office Staff**

Rebekkah Winters

Data Manager

Brenda Holsombach

Office Manager

**School Nurse**

Lindsey Goins

Main office: 724-4422

After school: 724-1372

Pleasant Gardens Elementary Web Page: <http://www.pg.mcdowell.k12.nc.us>

**Meet Our Faculty and Staff:**

All staff can be reached via email:

firstname.lastname@mcdowell.k12.nc.us

**Teachers**

**Grade Level**

Shannon Daudert

Pre School

Sandra Massingill

Pre School

Linda Hamilton

Kindergarten

Kelly Phillips

Kindergarten

Shelby Vied

Kindergarten

Ashley Thornton

First Grade

Pattie Buchanan

First Grade

Kinsey Jamison

First Grade

Tammy Smith

Second Grade

Kim Gundle

Second Grade

Hannah Hutchins

Second Grade

Anna Helms

Third Grade

Stephanie Roland

Third Grade

Marlean Duncan

Third Grade

Donna Pyatt

Fourth Grade

Laura Kealy

Fourth Grade

Lynn Freeman

Fifth Grade

John Beck

Fifth Grade

Christina David

Exceptional Children

Megan Morris

Exceptional Children

Blair Smith

Exceptional Children

Jennifer Shosho

Exceptional Children

Melanie Pollard  
Hanna Hagaman  
Deana Marsh  
Alisha Painter  
Sydney Wilson

Speech  
ESL  
Physical Education  
Technology Assistant  
Media Specialist

Rachael Stewart  
Tera Wilis  
Crystal Hardin

School Counselor/MTSS  
School Social Worker  
Behavior Support Assistant

Iris Lawing  
Martha Gouge

Academic Facilitator/ Testing Coordinator  
MTSS Intervention Specialist/ Testing Coordinator

### **Teacher Assistants**

Misty Honeycutt  
Mitzi Ray  
Renee McKinney  
Jody Griffin  
Tonya Biddix  
Cyndi Pendley  
Nancy Murdock  
Jennifer Franklin

### **Position**

PreK  
PreK  
Kindergarten  
First Grade  
Second Grade  
Third Grade  
Fourth Grade  
Fifth Grade

### **Cafeteria**

Susie Roberts  
Barbara Davis  
Beverly Smith

Cafeteria Manager

### **Custodians**

Jeannie McKinney  
Alan Carver  
Luella Wishon

First Shift Custodian  
Second Shift Custodian  
Part-Time Custodian

### **Bus Drivers**

Jody Griffin/Jennifer Franklin  
Renee McKinney  
Tonya Biddix/ Misty Honeycutt

#160  
#205  
#166

**Substitute Bus Drivers**

Marlean Duncan

Angel Stroupe

**School Arrival and Departure****Arrival:**

The doors will open for students at 7:30.

**\*If you live out of the Pleasant Gardens Elementary School district, and your child has been approved to attend PG, they will not be allowed to ride a yellow school bus.**

**All car riders will be dropped off and picked up in the front circle.**

**The instructional day will end at 2:45 with bus riders dismissing between at 2:45. Car riders will begin dismissal at 2:50.**

**All students should be picked up by 3:10.**

**Bad Weather Procedure/School Closings**

During the school year, if it is necessary to either dismiss school early or cancel school because of inclement weather conditions, the superintendent of schools will post messages on the McDowell County School WEATHERLINE (652-3869), send a countywide Parent Link message and notify selected television and radio stations which are listed below.

**Radio Stations**

WBRM (1250AM), WWNC(570AM), WTOE(1470AM), WMNC(92.1FM), WNCW(88.7FM), WMIT(106.9FM), WSSL(100.5FM), WKYK(940AM)

**TV Stations**

WLOS- Asheville, WBTV- Charlotte, WYFF- Greenville

WSPA - Spartanburg, WSOC Charlotte

**Student Expectations:****Role of a Student**

Pleasant Gardens Elementary School is a place of learning. The mission of our school is to help students learn and prepare them to be successful and productive citizens. Students are expected to:

1. Follow all school and classroom rules and procedures.

2. Treat others with respect and dignity.
3. Prepare for and participate in the learning process.
4. Use class time wisely.
5. Listen attentively.
6. Use appropriate language.
7. Respect school and other people's property.

### **Dress Code**

The McDowell County Dress Code include: Shirts, blouses and dresses shall cover the abdomen, back and both shoulders. See-through clothing is prohibited. Shirts and tops must meet the waistband of pants, shorts or skirts at all times with no midriff, cleavage or underwear visible at any time. To view the entire Student Dress Code, please visit the McDowell County web site policy manual # 4316.

### **Discipline Policy for Pleasant Gardens Elementary**

In order to guarantee your child the excellent learning climate he or she deserves, the following discipline plan has been utilized.

1. The teacher will send classroom rules home.
2. Student referrals to the office for discipline problems must be accompanied by an online discipline form completed by the teacher in the school discipline system. Teachers are encouraged to contact parents before an incident reaches the point of an office referral.
3. Most office discipline referrals will be treated as follows:
  - Conference with student - warning; parent contacted
  - Conference with Parents
  - In School Suspension will be used for continued disruption or for a serious incident.

### **Important**

The principal and or principal's designee reserves the right to alter the above punishments depending on the referral and the severity of the offense. Communicating a threat, possession of a weapon (pocket knives included), fighting, or possession of drugs or tobacco may result in immediate out of school suspension.

Students who behave appropriately and positively will be rewarded with praise, rewards, positive notes home, and/or lunch with the principal.

### **Homework Policy for Pleasant Gardens Elementary**

Homework should be relevant to direct instruction in the classroom and aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for your child's grade level. The faculty and staff expect every child to read every night. There will be times when this reading is designated by the classroom teacher. However, we encourage students to read selections that are of personal interest to them. Students should complete assignments not finished at school and/or relevant assignments. For optimum performance, every effort will be targeted to provide students the

opportunity to complete all assignments in the classroom (excluding long term projects, etc) where the teacher is available as a facilitator and resource.

- K- reading time with practice for the week with parents
- 1st- no more than 10 min. reading time and practice for the week
- 2nd- no more than 20 min. reading time and practice for the week
- 3rd- no more than 30 min. reading time and practice for the week
- 4th- no more than 40 min. reading time and practice for the week
- 5th- no more than 50 min. reading time and practice for the week

### **Riding a School Bus**

**Riding the school bus is a privilege for students. This privilege can be taken away at any time for disruptive or unsatisfactory behavior.**

1. Students will follow all directions of the bus driver.
2. Students are to remain seated at all times in their assigned seats.
3. Students are expected to show respect for self and others.
4. Eating and drinking are not permitted on the bus.
5. Shouting, teasing, pushing or fighting is not allowed at any time on the bus.
6. Students will not be allowed to call home during the school day to arrange visitation with friends.
7. Electronic devices are not permitted on school buses.

**If your child is to go home any other way than he/she normally goes, he/she is to bring a written note from home that has been signed and dated, and states the change. The student must have this note approved by the office. Without a note, this will not be permitted.**

### **Bus violations will be handled in the following manner:**

1. First Warning-Student called to the office
2. Second Warning- Parent Notification.
3. If further misconduct occurs, the student may be suspended from the bus. Suspended students must be transported to and from school by parents.
  - First time – 3-day suspension
  - Second time – 5-day suspension
  - Third time – 10-day suspension
  - Fourth time – year suspension

Please note: Depending on the severity of the offense, the principal or designee may suspend a student from the bus at any time.

### **Textbooks & Library Books**

Textbooks issued to students are the property of McDowell County Schools. They should be handled with care and returned in good condition. Students are responsible for replacing books that are lost, stolen, or damaged beyond use.

### **Cell Phone/Electronic Devices**

Cell phones and electronic devices including CD players, iPods, MP3 Players, video games, etc. are not permitted during the school day. Students should not have phones or devices out at school. Students should not be calling, emailing, or texting their parents and friends during their time at school.

Electronic items will be taken and will need to be retrieved by the parent.

### **Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol Policy**

The use or possession of tobacco products, drugs, and/or alcohol is prohibited on school property or at any school related function. Individuals who are using tobacco products on school ground or at school sponsored events will be asked to stop or to leave the school grounds. Possession of illegal drugs or alcohol will be reported. Refer to the McDowell County School Code of Student Conduct policy for more information.

### **Parent Expectations:**

#### **Role of a Parent/Guardian**

As collaborative partners in educating Pleasant Gardens Elementary children, it is important that parents:

1. Help enforce regular and punctual attendance.
2. Establish and maintain open lines of communication with the school which includes speaking to the students' teacher with questions or concerns. The line of communication should be a discussion with the teacher and then a discussion with the principal to help reach a mutual agreement or solution to the issue.
3. Hold students accountable for his or her actions and behaviors.
4. Encourage them with high expectations and use positive language about school.
5. Attend all school related events and functions
6. If there are going to be changes in the students mode of transportation at the end of the school day, please call the school prior to 2:00 whenever possible. This gives the school time to get the message to the teacher to be sure that students get home properly.

#### **Communication:**

If a parent needs to talk to the teacher, parents are encouraged to call their child's teacher during the teachers planning period, office hours or email the teacher with questions or concerns at the email address provided by the teacher. Teachers will return emails and phone calls after students have been dismissed for the day. The best time to meet with your child's teacher is at the end of the instructional day. Please schedule an appointment with your child's teacher. Teachers will not be taken out of instructional time to meet but will gladly schedule a mutually convenient meeting time. You may also communicate through Class Dojo.

### **Change of Address/Phone**

**Please notify the teacher and school office immediately of any change of phone number or address. We must have reliable information on file in case of an emergency.**

### **Telephone**

It is extremely important for us to have a telephone number on file so that we can reach you in case of an emergency. If you do not have a telephone, please give us the phone number of a close friend, relative, or neighbor that will be available in the event of an emergency.

We also use a telephone service to make announcements. Please report changes in phone numbers to the school. If we do not have accurate and up to date numbers you could miss out on important events!

### **Visiting the School**

We will have limited visitors during the COVID Pandemic. Please understand that we value our volunteers and hope to be able to bring them into the school as soon as allowed. More information will be coming throughout the school year.

### **Medicine at School**

If a student requires medication at school, the student must have a completed "Request for Medication" form signed by the doctor and the parent. The forms can be obtained from the school office. The medicine must be delivered by a parent in its original container and given to the school nurse. Students are not allowed to carry medications to and from school or to keep them during the school day, except for special considerations such as asthma inhalers, etc.

### **Special Health Concerns**

If your child has severe reactions to bee stings or insect stings, foods, other allergies, or special health concerns, please notify the school in writing so that we will have the necessary information. The teacher, secretary, the school nurse and principal should be made aware of these conditions.

### **School Information:**

#### **Lost and Found**

We encourage you to have your child's name on lunch boxes, notebooks, jackets, etc. , so that we may get them to their rightful owner. Items found at school are brought to the office. Lost and Found is located in the Multipurpose room.

#### **Student Usage of Telephone**

Students should ask to use the telephone only in case of an emergency. The classroom teacher must grant permission and the student must have a phone pass provided by the teacher.

**Arrangements for after-school activities should be made before coming to school.**



**Students will not be allowed to call home to change their method of travel in the afternoon, to go home with a friend or to request money for an after school event.**

### **Immunization records/Medication/Birth Certificate**

It is mandatory that your child have his or her birth certificate, K Health Assessment, and an updated immunization record on file in the school office. Failure to do so may lead to suspension from school. Kindergarten students have thirty calendar days from the first day of attendance to have their health assessment record completed by a certified health official and to obtain the required immunizations. After the 30 days, the child will not be able to attend school until the required immunizations have been obtained.

## **North Carolina Laws, Regulations, and Policies**

### **Compulsory Attendance Ages**

North Carolina General Statutes, Section 115C-3 78 requires every parent, guardian, or custodian of a child between the ages of 7 and 16 years old to cause such child to attend public school every day that school is in session, unless the child has been excused by the superintendent, principal, or teacher in charge. Violation of this law can ultimately result in court action. Children under the age of seven (7), and enrolled in public school, are subject to the Compulsory Attendance Law. No person shall encourage, entice, or counsel any such student to be unlawfully absent from school.

### **Attendance**

To be counted present for the day, the student must be in attendance 75 percent of the regular school day. Please see attached attendance policy updates.

### **Unexcused Absences**

After the equivalent of three accumulated unexcused absences, a parent or guardian shall be notified through a Parent Link call.

At six unexcused absences, the principal shall notify the parent or guardian by mail that he/she may be in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Law. The Principal or Designee will notify the Truancy Officer and the Truancy Officer will work with the student and parents in an effort to eliminate the student's attendance problems. This could involve attending Truancy Counsel. Six unexcused absences will result in immediate interventions by a truancy response team. These teams may consist of teachers, administrator(s), counselor(s), social worker, and nurse from the child's school and representatives from DSS and the courts. The parent may be in violation of North Carolina's Compulsory Attendance Law, and may be subject to prosecution if the absences cannot be justified under the established policies of the North Carolina State Board of Education. If this is a violation, the school is required to notify the Juvenile Court Counselor.

If a child has accumulated at least ten (10) unexcused absences during the school year, North Carolina law requires that the parent be contacted and confirmed that there was previous notification of the child's excessive absences. This is the final documentation of notification. You may be subject to prosecution if the absences cannot be justified under the established policies

of the North Carolina State Board of Education. It is the parent's responsibility to demonstrate a good faith effort to comply with the Compulsory Attendance Law. If the parent has responded to the three and six day notification, please continue to keep the child's information up to date and ensure that all school requirements are met.

### **Excessive Absences**

Class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process and may be taken into account in assessing academic achievement.

The principal shall notify parents and take all other steps required by G.S. 115C-378 for excessive absences.

**The McDowell County School Board Policy manual can be found in its entirety by visiting the McDowell County Schools Website [www.mcdowell.k12.nc.us](http://www.mcdowell.k12.nc.us)**

**Complete student related policies such as Attendance can be found in the 4000 Series.**

**Pleasant Gardens Elementary School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities.**

## **SCHOOLWIDE TITLE I PROGRAMS**

All McDowell County Elementary Schools operate school-wide Title I programs. Title I provides federal funding for schools to help students who are behind academically or are at risk of falling behind. Funding is based on the number of lower-income children in a school but services are provided to help all students achieve academic success. Title I money may be combined with other funds to provide more services and resources for students. These services can include additional personnel, parental involvement activities, professional development, and purchase of materials and supplies. A school-wide Title I program can offer programs that can help improve your child's education. A good education can give your child a better chance of success in life!

Title I schools are required to notify parents of their rights to receive certain information.

- Parents may request information concerning the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s), including the degrees held, certifications held, and whether the teacher is certified in the area he/she is teaching.
- Schools must notify parents if their child has been assigned, or has been taught for at least four consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet the Highly Qualified definition.
- Parents may request information concerning whether or not their child is receiving instruction by a teacher assistant, and if so, his/her qualifications.
  - Parent communication and involvement are important, especially under the *No Child Left Behind* legislation. Parents in Title I schools have certain rights concerning parent involvement.
- Parents must be a part of developing or revising, as needed, a written parent involvement policy that is distributed to all parents.
- Parents must be invited to an annual public meeting.
- Parents have a right to be involved in planning and implementing the parent involvement program in their school.

- Parents can receive materials and training to foster greater parent involvement.
- Parents have the right to see yearly “report cards” showing how their child and the school are performing under the school-wide Title I program.

Parents can help!

- Look at your child’s performance and be sure you understand where your child stands in reading and mathematics.
- Talk with your child’s teacher (s) and principal to find out how you and your school can work together to improve your child’s performance.
- Attend parent conferences.
- Participate in parent involvement activities and opportunities.
- Be aware of your school’s performance under *No Child Left Behind* and the state testing program.
- Communicate your school’s successes to your community and look for ways to support your school.

*Educators cannot improve schools alone. In North Carolina, we reach these high standards as a partnership with parents, schools, and communities.* Adapted from *Information for Parents in Title I Schools* published by Public Schools of North Carolina, Department of Public Instruction.

### **McDowell County Schools’ Dress Code**

The Board of Education for MCS believes that the dress and personal appearance of students greatly affect their academic performance and their interaction with other students. The board requests that parents outfit their children in clothing that is conducive to learning. Generally, dress and grooming standards as determined by the student and his or her parents will be deemed acceptable. However, the Board prohibits any appearance or clothing that does the following: (1) violates the guidelines in this policy; (2) is substantially disruptive; (3) is provocative or obscene; or (4) endangers the health or safety of the student or others. The following expectations for student dress have been established by the McDowell County Board of Education to promote a safe and optimum learning environment.

The following dress standards shall be observed in all McDowell County Schools:

1. For safety reasons, pants must be worn at or above the hip line and should not extend below the shoes.
2. Shirts, blouses, and dresses shall cover the abdomen, back, and both shoulders. There will be no see-through clothing. Shirts and tops must meet the waistband of pants, shorts, or skirts at all times with no midriff, cleavage, or underwear visible at any time.
3. Footwear is required and must be safe and appropriate for classroom activities. With the exception of medically prescribed footwear, soles and heels are not to exceed a total height of 3 inches.
4. Any clothing, jewelry, accessories, or book bags that depict, advertise, or promote gangs, illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco use or that convey sexually explicit, inflammatory, or vulgar language or images are prohibited.
5. Trench coats are prohibited.
6. Skirts, dresses, and shorts must fall at least as low as four inches above the top of the knee.

7. Jewelry and accessories that could be used as weapons are prohibited.
8. No head covering of any sort shall be worn in the classroom.

The principal may allow exceptions to this dress code only on special occasions, such as holidays, pep rallies, and special performances. A principal may further prescribe additional dress requirements appropriate to certain classes, such as physical education, career and technical education (vocational), and science classes.

Violations of the dress code shall result in disciplinary action as follows:

Warning by the teacher and parents will be notified. Teacher will document the offense and forward a referral to the principal for the record. The dress code violation will be corrected before the student may return to class.

**SECTION II**  
**PRIVACY OF STUDENT RECORDS**  
**RIGHT OF PARENTS TO REVIEW AND INSPECT**  
**STUDENT CUMULATIVE RECORDS**

Those who have the right to inspect and review the cumulative record folder kept about the student include (1) parents/guardians of students who are under 18 years of age, (2) parents/guardians who claim students who are at least 18 as dependents under Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code, and (3) students who are at least 18 (hereafter called eligible students).

The McDowell County School system presumes that parents of students who are currently attending a school within the McDowell County School System claim the student as a dependent for tax purposes. Any student at least 18 years of age and attending a school within the system who does not want the parents to have access to the cumulative record folder must so inform the principal of the school where the records are kept and prove that he/she is not a tax dependent of the parents. If a parent of a student who is at least 18 and no longer attending a school within the district wishes to inspect and review the child's cumulative record file, the parent must prove to the principal that the student is a dependent for federal income tax purposes.

Requests from parents or eligible students who wish to review the cumulative record folder shall be made to the principal of the student's school. When the principal receives a request for review of the records from a parent or a student who has a right to inspect the records, the principal shall schedule the review. The appointment date should be as early as possible but never later than 45 days after the request is made. The inspection and review shall be made in the office of the principal or at another designated place.

A school official competent in interpreting student records shall be present to explain the implications of the records that are examined. Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect records and live within fifty miles of the place where the records are kept must do so at the place designated by the school system. After the inspection, they may request copies of the records they inspected. Parents or students who live farther than 50 miles from the place where the records are kept may request copies of the

records without first inspecting them at the school or central office. The copies shall be sent by registered mail, return receipt requested.

## ***IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act***

***Child Find Project*** - Child Find is a component of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that requires states to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities, aged birth to 22, who are in need of early intervention or special education. Referrals may be made to any school or to the Exceptional Children's department.

### ***Discipline***

***Authority of School Personnel and Case-by-Case Determination*** - School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a change of placement, made in accordance with the following requirements related to discipline, is appropriate for a child with a disability who violates a school code of student conduct. Note: A removal is usually called an out-of-school suspension (OSS), but it may also include any time the school calls and asks you to pick up your child before the end of the school day because of disciplinary reasons. It also includes in-school-suspension (ISS), if services are not provided to your child, and suspension from the bus, IF transportation is a related service for child's IEP.

***General*** - To the extent that they also take such action for children without disabilities, school personnel may, for not more than 10 school days in a row, remove a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct from his or her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, or suspension. School personnel may also impose additional removals of the child of not more than 10 school days in a row in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct, as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement.

Once a child with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for a total of 10 school days in the same school year, the school district must, during any subsequent days of removal in that school year, provide services to the extent required below under the sub-heading Services. If the behavior that violated the student code of conduct was not a manifestation of the child's disability and the disciplinary change of placement would exceed 10 school days in a row, school personnel may apply the disciplinary procedures to that child with a disability in the same manner and for the same duration as it would to children without disabilities, except that the school must provide services to that child as described below under Services. The child's IEP Team determines the interim alternative educational setting for such services.

### ***Transfer Students***

***Transfers within McDowell County Schools*** - Students with IEPs are assigned to the school they would normally attend based on attendance zone or a parent's school choice. However, changes to school assignment will be made when the goals, objectives, services and/or the accommodations on the IEP cannot be implemented at the attendance zone or choice school. If it is determined that a student's IEP cannot be implemented at the student's attendance zone or choice school, then the student will be assigned to a school that can implement the IEP within the region of the attendance zone school. If it is determined that a student's IEP cannot be implemented at the regional school because of class size, transportation issues, accessibility

and/or other factors, then Special Education and Related Service will determine the school assignment.

### ***Dispute Resolution***

Any person who has a concern about the education of a student with a disability can raise the issue in one of several ways. For example, it is always appropriate to: discuss the matter with the student's teacher or principal at the local school, or it is also helpful to contact the Director of Exceptional Children Program in the central office of the school system, charter school, or state operated program. The Exceptional Children Division's consultants for dispute resolution and consultants for instructional support and related services are also able to offer consultation to assist parents, advocates, or school system, charter school, or state operated programs personnel who request help with problem-solving. Consultants at the Department of Public Instruction are neutral and refrain from taking sides when there is a disagreement, but consistently advocate for appropriate services for children with disabilities. They are committed to the protection of rights for children with disabilities and their parents. An informal means of problem solving is provided through the Exceptional Children Division's Facilitated IEP Program for school systems, charter schools, state operated programs, and parents. Formal means for dispute resolution are also available through the Department of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children Division. These options are requirements of federal and state laws governing special education - Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), and Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities. When there is an unresolved disagreement over identification, evaluation or educational placement of a child with a disability or the provision of free appropriate public education, the options for dispute resolution are mediation, formal written complaint, and due process hearing. A formal complaint filed on the same issue(s) as contained in a petition for a due process hearing will not be investigated. These options are also available to the adult student who has reached the age of majority (18), unless legally deemed incompetent or unable to make educational decisions.

**For more information please contact:**

**Department of Exceptional Children Programs at 652-6580**

## **NOTIFICATION of RIGHTS UNDER FERPA**

At the beginning of each school year, the McDowell County School System shall send the following notice to parents of students under the age of eighteen and to students who are at least eighteen and are currently attending school within the system:

TO ALL PARENTS OF STUDENTS CURRENTLY ATTENDING THE MCDOWELL COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM AND ALL STUDENTS CURRENTLY ATTENDING THE SYSTEM WHO HAVE REACHED THE AGE OF 18:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") 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 the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate. Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the School principal, clearly identify 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 by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health 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 a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by McDowell County Schools to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-5901.

According to FERPA, information designated as directory information may be released by the district without parental consent, provided annual notification has been given. Directory information is information that is generally considered NOT harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. In addition, Federal No Child Left Behind legislation requires that McDowell County Schools provide military recruiters, upon request, with 3 directory information categories – names, addresses and telephone listings –unless parents have advised McDowell County Schools in writing that they do not want their student's information disclosed to the military. Traditionally, military recruiters only request this information for current 11th and 12th grade students.

**Directory information may include, but is not limited to, the information listed below:**

Name of student

Address of student

Telephone number of student

Photographs

Audio recordings

Video recordings

Dates of attendance

Grade level

Major Field of Study

Date and Place of Birth

The most recent educational agency or institution attended

Participation in officially recognized activities and sports

Weight and height of members of athletic teams

Degrees, honors, and awards received

Schools do use discretion when releasing directory information and will not release such information if it is the principal's judgment that releasing such information would not be in the best interest of the student.

Please consider very carefully any decision to withhold "directory information." If you inform McDowell County Schools in writing not to release information, any requests for such information from individuals or entities not affiliated with McDowell County Schools shall be refused. FOR EXAMPLE: REFUSAL COULD MEAN NO INFORMATION TO NEWSPAPER, SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHER, ANNUAL PUBLISHER (NO PICTURE OR NAME IN THE ANNUAL), NO INCLUSION IN ANY SCHOOL NEWS RELEASE (EXAMPLE: HONOR ROLL), ETC. Any parent/guardian or eligible student (18 years of age or older), who wants to withhold the release of directory information entirely, or who only wants to withhold the release of directory information to the military, must notify the principal of the school where the student is enrolled, in writing, within (14) days of the student's first day of school. A request to withhold directory information does not carry over from one school year to the next or from one school to another.

**Request to Withhold Release of Directory Information forms are available on the McDowell County School District website and at your child's school.**