

MONTGOMERY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Lower Campus

2024-2025

“Home of the Cougars”

373 Burnt Hill Road

Skillman, NJ 08558



Main Office: (609) 466-7604

Fax Number: (609) 466-7198

Attendance & Message Line: (609) 466-7610

Website: www.mtsd.k12.nj.us

Principal: Mrs. Lisa Romano

Assistant Principal: Scott Pachuta

This Student Handbook belongs to:

NAME: _____

HOME ROOM TEACHER: _____

Welcome Students of the Montgomery Middle School Lower Campus!

The Montgomery Township School District shall establish the highest standards of excellence for educating all individuals to use knowledge, values and skills enabling them to function with self-esteem, self-respect, self-discipline, integrity and compassion as responsible members of society. The school district will provide a nurturing and stimulating environment, a dedicated staff, an innovative curriculum and the opportunity for community involvement and support.

We want every student to have a challenging, safe, rewarding, and successful school year and to feel good about coming to school each day. This will happen if you work with the school staff in a constructive and positive manner; take responsibility for your own learning, behavior, and decisions; give each and every class your best effort; ask for help when you need it; and treat yourself and others with respect and consideration. If you have any questions about anything in this handbook, please ask a middle school teacher, the school counselor, or one of us.

Mrs. Lisa Romano, *Principal*

Mr. Scott Pachuta, *Assistant Principal*

The Montgomery Middle School Community

The Montgomery Township Middle School strives to prepare each student to be a knowledgeable, responsible and contributing member of the school, local and world communities. Our aim is to have our students function with self-esteem, integrity, and compassion. To accomplish this goal, the administration and staff are committed to building a community in which students experience a supportive environment, fulfill their own needs for mastery or achievement, participate in decision making to determine their own future, and become empowered to care and contribute to better their community. We strive to model and impress upon our students the value of caring, responsibility, fairness, respect, trustworthiness and citizenship in our day-to-day interactions with others. As a community, we work together to create an environment that encourages students:

- To develop respect for self, for others and for our environment;
- To develop critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and communication skills;
- To develop a heightened awareness of and proficiency in using technology as a tool to extend human capability;
- To develop the ability to apply what has been learned and the desire to continue learning;
- To develop a sense of inquiry.

***“If you teach children, you must have no patronizing attitude toward them.
Whoever approaches a child without humility, without wonderment,
and without infinite respect, misses in their judgment what is before them.”***



INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS & FAMILIES

LMS Code of Conduct

The LMS Code of Conduct Policy is written in accordance with Board Policy and Regulation [#5600](#) to establish standards, policies, and procedures for positive student development and student behavioral expectations within the school community, including on a school bus or at school sponsored functions, and, as appropriate, student conduct away from school grounds.

The LMS Code of Conduct and its practice of Progressive Discipline and Restorative Practices are implemented in an effort to foster the health, safety, social, and emotional well-being of students while at the same time promoting the achievement of high academic standards and establishing parameters of intervention.

Please take the time to review the expectations of the LMS Code of Conduct with your child.

District Policies and Regulations

The Board of Education has approved policies and regulations designed to support the learning, safety, and welfare of all students, staff, and families within the district. **This handbook contains the information you will need on a day-to-day basis;** for further information on district policies and expectations, you may review the school policies listed below:

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The complete list of Montgomery Township School District policies and regulations can be located on our district website. Policies can be located by selecting the “BOE” tab and select “[Policies & Regulations](#)” policies on the drop down menu. Policies are listed numerically on the left side of the page. For those who do not have access to a computer, copies of the policies are available in the main office of the high school.

Equity in Our Schools

The Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, mental or physical handicap, socio-economic status, age, or gender in any of its policies or regulations related to admissions, employment, financial aid, educational service, programs, or activities. If you have a problem in this regard, make an appointment to see the school counselor. Appeals may be made to the school administrators or affirmative action officers as appropriate. Further appeals may be made to the superintendent, board of education, and the New Jersey Commissioner of Education. The district affirmative action officer for any program or facilities’ issue relating to the other forms of discrimination listed above is the Director of Human Resources.

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ATTENDANCE

Attendance: [District Policy #5200](#)

The Montgomery Township Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to provide a thorough and efficient education for every student within the district in keeping with the prevailing laws of the State of New Jersey. In order for administrators and teachers to successfully fulfill their responsibilities to students, it is essential that all students accept their responsibility to attend school as scheduled, and that parents/guardians support and reinforce their child's regular attendance.

To conform to state regulations requiring school districts to define “**excused**” and “**unexcused**” absences:

a. “An **unexcused absence** that counts toward truancy” is a student’s absence from school for a full or a portion of a day for any reason that is not an “excused absence” as defined below.

b. “An **excused absence**” is a student’s absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for any absence for the reasons listed below. Although an absence may be excused, it may count against a student’s 90% attendance requirement and thus cause diminished success and/or academic loss of credit (ALC) for a course:

1. The student’s required attendance in court;
2. Where appropriate, when consistent with Individualized Education Programs, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. §§ 794 and 705(20), and individualized health care plans;
3. The student’s suspension from school;
4. College visits, up to three days per school year, for students in grades 11 and 12;
5. Interviews with an admissions officer of an institution of higher education;
6. Examination for a driver's license;
7. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day with documentation from the doctor’s office;
8. Take Our Children to Work Day;
9. Religious observance, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16;
10. Participation in observance of Veterans Day, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-13.2;
11. Participation in district board of election membership activities, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-33;
12. Closure of a busing school district that prevents a student from having transportation to the receiving school;
13. An absence considered excused by the Commissioner of Education and/or a New Jersey Department of Education rule.

14. An absence for a reason not listed above, not to exceed two days, but deemed excused by the principal upon a written request by the student's parent stating the reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an excused absence.

“Unexcused tardiness” may constitute an unexcused absence that counts toward truancy in accordance with [Policy 5230](#).

For necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day, documentation from the doctor's office must be **on official office script pad or stationery-Must include duration of absences to be excused and date of appointment. *All doctor's notes will be subject to the school's validation of the appointment date.**

An “**unexcused absence**” is a student's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed above. Though a student may be absent with parental approval for reasons other than those listed above, the absence will be defined as verified but **unexcused**.

Extended Absences

For families planning extended travel, if a student is out of school for more than ten consecutive days without medical reason, that student must be unenrolled and re-registered with our Registrar upon return to the district.

Notice to School of Student Absence(s)

Parents should report student absences in the Genesis Parent Resources application or call the attendance line at 609-466-7610, (select #4, then #1) as early as possible to report an absence. **This does not “excuse” an absence but informs the school that your child is absent with your knowledge.** The student's absence will be deemed either “**excused**” or “**unexcused counting toward truancy**” based upon the documentation explaining the reason for the absence(s) that is presented to the Main Office by the student following their return to school. The school will make every effort to contact parents/guardians of any student who is absent for whom a phone call from home was not received.

School Response to Unexcused Absences Counting Toward Truancy N.J.A.C.6A:16-7.6, school staff responses for unexcused absences are as follows:

For up to four cumulative unexcused absences counting towards truancy, the school district shall: make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day; make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parents; identify in consultation with the student's parents needed action designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance; proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10, if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected; and cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences counting towards truancy, the school district shall: make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day; make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the students' parents; evaluate the appropriateness of prior action taken; develop an action plan to establish outcomes based upon the student's patterns of unexcused absences and to specify the interventions for supporting the student's return to school and regular attendance, which may include any or all of the following: refer or consult with the building's intervention and referral services team

(I&RS), pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8; conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral, and health needs; consider an alternate educational placement; make a referral to or coordinate with a community based social and health provider agency or other community resource; refer to a court or a court program; proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A.9:6-1 et. Seq. and N.J.A.C.6A:16-10, if a potentially missing or child abuse situation is detected: and engage the student's family. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

For cumulative unexcused absences counting towards truancy of 10 or more, a student between the ages of 6 and 16, is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the school district shall: make a determination regarding the need for a court referral for the truancy; continue to consult with the parent and the involved agencies to support the student's return to school and regular attendance; cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:3828 through 31, Article 3B, Compelling Attendance at School, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required; and a court referral may be made as follows: when school officials determine unexcused absences education law, pursuant to **N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25**, and the district board of education's policies, the parent may be referred to municipal court; a written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the municipal court; or when there is evidence of a juvenile-family crisis, pursuant to **N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22.g**, the student may be referred to Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part; a written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the juvenile-family crisis intervention unit.

For a student with a disability, the attendance plan and disciplinary and remedial procedures shall be applied, where applicable, in accordance with the student's individualized education program, pursuant to 20 U.S.C 1400 et seq., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the procedural protections set forth in **N.J.A.C. 6A:14**; accommodation plan under 29 U.S.C. 794 and 705(20); and individualized healthcare plan and individualized emergency healthcare plan, pursuant to **N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3(b)5xii**.

Arriving to School and Class

Parent drop off times are from 8:00am to 8:24am. Students arriving to school between 8:00am and 8:15am should report to the gym. Students arriving to school between 8:15am and 8:24am should report to homeroom. Students arriving to school **after the second bell (8:25am)** are to report to the Main Office before reporting to class. This will prevent the student from being marked absent. Parents will be notified by a teacher, school counselor, or school administrator when students are excessively late to class or school.

After-School Activities END at 4:10pm. No Late Buses.

Students who remain after-school must be under the direct supervision of a teacher, activity sponsor, coach, or other staff member at all times when they are in the building. Students will not be permitted to roam around the building or go into unsupervised areas inside of or around the building. At 4pm students are expected to be picked up by a parent/guardian. Students not picked up by 4:20pm more than 3 times will not be permitted to stay.

Early Dismissal/Release Requests

Parents may provide a written request to sign a student out before the end of the school day. The note must include: student name and teacher, date/time of departure, reason for leaving, name of person picking student up, parent/guardian signature, daytime telephone number. It is the student's responsibility

to get permission and to take the note to the Main Office during the Homeroom Period. Parents will need to report to the office to sign students out of school, and back into school if the student will return before the end of the school day. **Parents must provide a picture ID when signing students out. Please note: excessive early releases will affect student's learning.**

Emergency Closings

In the event that the school must close early, students will take their usual routes home. Students should make sure they talk with their parents about what they should do in the event that no one is home when they arrive. **There should always be a back-up plan that students can follow – parents should discuss this with students periodically throughout the school year. Any closings due to inclement weather will be posted on the District Web-Site.**

Field Trips

A field trip is an optional activity that is planned to enhance or expand the educational programs at LMS by providing an experience not available in the regular classroom. Parental permission must be obtained prior to the date of the event for the student to participate. The school reserves the right to exclude a student from a field trip if attendance and/or behavior are of concern (as per District Regulation [5600 Student Discipline/Code of Conduct](#)).

CORE VALUES & EXPECTATIONS

At LMS our core values are **Respect**, **Responsibility**, and **Kindness**. When students adhere to these values, we are able to create a safe, supportive, and successful learning environment for students and faculty alike.

Respect	Respect yourself, others, and your school environment.
Responsibility	Responsibility includes time management, being prepared for class and good work habits.
Kindness	Treating others with consideration and understanding. Knowing that we are all different, with varying needs, strengths and weaknesses and accepting those differences.

Primary responsibility for classroom behavior rests with the classroom teacher. However, teachers can hold students accountable for violations of school rules by referring the student to administration and/or school counselors.

Counseling Services

Middle School counselors assist students with educational plans and with personal problems. Counselors also meet with small groups of students to provide information and assistance; promote productive study skills; help orient new students; provide mediation when necessary; oversee the administration of the standardized programs; and work with parents and guardians, teachers, and students to develop cooperative plans for solving student problems. Each grade level has its own counselor who remains with that group of students for each consecutive grade level while they are in the middle school.

Any requests for class placement changes during the first 3 marking periods must go through the counselor first. The counselor will then submit the request to the Principal for approval. PLACEMENT CHANGES ARE NOT MADE DURING MARKING PERIOD 4.

Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying (HIB): [Policy #5512](#)

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying: means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory (handicap) disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds... that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property; [and]

- A. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students, in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school; [or]
- B. Creates a hostile educational environment at school for the student; [or]
- C. Infringes on the rights of the student at school by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student."

Consequences for bullying are determined by the acts committed (student conduct), not whether the incident is labeled as bullying or not.

The complete HIB policy and accompanying forms can be found on the [District Website under Parents/Community](#).

Student Conflict

All other negative interactions between students (ranges from mild to severe). Although the school may need to take action concerning student conflict or unintentional harm of one student towards another, not all acts are considered bullying. In any case, all such matters will be investigated, and based upon what the investigation reveals, appropriate action will be taken according to the LMS Code of Conduct.

Dress Code [Policy #5511](#)

Although we recognize that the way students dress is a reflection of personal choice, there is certain attire that is not appropriate for school. Montgomery Lower Middle School requires students to dress in a manner appropriate for an educational environment. The school environment for students can be compared to a professional working environment for adults. Students can use the following guidelines when choosing their outfit each day. Clothing should be clean and neat, and embrace the following tenets:

- Be comfortable and suitable for students to remain focused and safe throughout the school day, and all classes/activities.
- No showing of midriff.
- No showing buttocks.
- No showing undergarments.
- No offensive language or images.
- With the exception of religious head coverings, no hats, hoods or head coverings: We need to be able to identify all members of the school. Students' faces and ears must be visible at all times. Hoods on a hoodie are acceptable, but must remain lowered.
- No wireless earbuds.

Examples of suitable attire would include, but are not limited to:

- Shirts, pants, bottoms, dresses that cover all of a student's stomach, mid-section, back, chest, buttocks, and undergarments.
- Footwear that is safe for all environments of our school.

- Headcoverings for cultural and religious reasons.

*Examples of **not suitable** attire would include, but are not limited to:*

- Hoods, Hats, Headcoverings: We need to be able to identify all members of the school. Students' faces and ears must be visible at all times.
- Clothing Tops: At all times, a student's stomach, mid-section, back, and chest must be covered. Additionally, undergarments cannot be showing. Tops without sleeves must have straps that cover any undergarments.
- Clothing Bottoms: Excessively short and/or revealing pants, shorts, and skirts that reveal undergarments or buttocks, are not suitable.
- Clothing and accessories with offensive messaging or promoting indecent or unacceptable behavior are not permitted.

In the event a student arrives at school dressed inappropriately, a parent/guardian will be notified and asked to replace the garments in question. Hats and other head coverings worn by students without administrative approval will be confiscated by a staff member unless approval has been granted.

Academic Integrity [Regulation 5600](#)

Academic integrity is valued highly at Lower Middle School. Students are expected to do their best at all times and submit only their own work on tests, projects, and homework. Students may **not** cheat on any test or assignment, plagiarize material, falsify sources, refuse to submit assignments, utilize generative AI in a way disallowed by the teacher, or otherwise indulged in academic dishonesty or negligence. In addition, students may not enable or allow cheating by providing their work for another student to copy or use with dishonest or deceptive intent.

Students must avoid plagiarism by adhering to copyright laws related to both printed and electronic resources. Integrity and honesty are essential components of responsible citizenship and character.

In the event of a violation, the student will engage in a restorative action/consequences to be determined by the teacher or administration.

Student Use of A.I.

It is essential for students to understand when and how to use generative AI effectively and ethically. AI tools can enhance classroom learning, and students' implementation of these tools should be guided with proper training, ethical considerations, and responsible oversight by teacher(s).

- Students should use AI tools and techniques in a responsible and ethical manner. This includes not using AI to cheat, plagiarize, or gain an unfair advantage. Generative AI tools should only be used for school-related creative work (e.g., to generate text or other creative works) when given approval or guidance from the classroom teacher.
- When using AI tools and techniques, students should provide proper attribution and credit to the source of the tool or technique.

School Computer, Software and Internet Usage

[Policy #2361](#)

The Internet is an exciting tool that allows us to communicate with people all over the world. It is important that we use it properly so that we don't break laws, offend others, or violate school rules. By using devices provided to students by MTSD, the student agrees to:

- Use the internet for educational purposes only.
- I will not use the internet to send, receive, or access information or graphics that contain pornography or racist/sexist/discriminatory material.
- I will not participate in Newsgroups, Chat Rooms or other forums on the Internet using school issued devices.
- I will not create a personal websites without permission and supervision by the teacher.
- I will not circumvent the school network security system (firewall) and other safety precautions.
- I will not take photos or record others on any device without teacher permission and guidance.
- I understand that the computers and software are owned by the Montgomery Township School District.
- I do not have the right to copy or distribute this software.
- I will not add personal software or download software from the Internet to any school computer.
- I will take responsibility for any computer account that is given to me. I will not give my password to anyone nor will I bypass the security systems that may be in place.
- I will not attempt to change the configuration of any computer or software, or change/alter another student's work or disks.
- I will not copy unauthorized software.
- I will abide by all patent, copyright or license restrictions that relate to any computing facilities products, programs, or documentation.
- I will treat the facilities with respect and will not intentionally damage them.
- I will not have food or drink near the computers.
- I will only use a computer when a staff member is present.
- LMS is a one-to-one learning device community, therefore there is no use of another student's chrome book or personal device without teacher's permission.

Parent/Guardian Media Consent

The Montgomery Township Board of Education will send you a parental consent form to both inform you and to request permission for your child's photo/image and personally identifiable information to be published in a newspaper.

As you are aware, there are potential dangers associated with the posting of personally identifiable information in a newspaper. These dangers have always existed. The law requires that we ask for your permission to use information about your child.

Pursuant to law, we will not release any personally identifiable information without prior written consent from you as parent or guardian. Personally identifiable information includes student names, photo or image, residential address, e-mail address, phone numbers and locations and times of class trips.

If you, as the parent or guardian, wish to rescind this agreement, you may do so at any time in writing by sending a letter to the principal of your child's school and such rescission will take place upon receipt by the school.

Personal Electronic Devices & Cell Phones

LMS recognizes the variety of ways technology can be used appropriately in school; however, there are also numerous ways it can be used inappropriately. As a result, **the use of personal electronic devices is not permitted during the school day** (i.e., cell phones, smart watches, or any device capable of an internet

connection) in an effort to maintain academic engagement at LMS. Cell phones should be silenced, off the person and stored in student lockers. Any staff member may take a device if a student is using it without permission. Confiscated devices can only be retrieved by a parent or guardian from the LMS main office.

Bus Expectations [Regulation 5600](#)

LMS core values of Respect, Responsibility and Kindness are expected to be upheld throughout our school community, including any transportation services. All behavioral expectations included in this Code of Conduct are applicable to students on the bus as well as on school premises.

Pupils may be excluded from the bus for disciplinary reasons by the school administrators or other designee, and parents shall provide for transportation to and from school during the period of such exclusion.

Advocacy [Regulation 5600](#)

Student voice is an important part of the LMS community. We value all beliefs and opinions and encourage students to speak up and come to a trusted adult when they see an injustice. There are appropriate and inappropriate ways of speaking up and advocating for change. Students will not disrupt the learning and well being of others in their pursuit of justice. In all instances, a student is expected to contact an adult (teacher, guidance counselor or administration) when they are concerned about something in school.

GRADING & ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Report Cards and Genesis Grade Reports

Marking period grades will be available online through [Genesis](#) at the end of each marking period. Parents are encouraged to log onto Genesis to see the posting of student grades and assignments during the year. Please refer to the district web-site for more information about how to sign up for an account and password for Genesis. **For more information about content specific grading policies, please reach out to your child's teacher or the supervisor for that specific content area. [A full list of departments at LMS can be found here.](#)**

Grading [Policy 2624](#)

The following table provides guidelines for interpreting numerical grades:

(Rounding to the nearest whole point will be used for marking period grades. For example, 0.5 to 0.9 are rounded to a whole point)

"A" Range = 90 to 100: 97 – 100 (A+)
 94 - 96 (A)
 90 - 93 (A-)
 "B" Range = 80 to 89: 87 - 89 (B+)
 84 - 86 (B)
 80 - 83 (B-)
 "C" Range = 70 to 79: 77 - 79 (C+)
 74 - 76 (C)
 70 - 73 (C-)
 "D" Range = 60 to 69: 67 - 69 (D+)
 64 - 66 (D)
 60 - 63 (D-)
 "F" Range = 59 or below: Failure

AP= Advanced Proficient
 P= Proficient
 PP= Partially Proficient

Letter grades as listed above will not
 have a final grade.

Homework & Missed Assignments

It is the responsibility of every student to record and complete all homework assignments. Parents should contact their child's teacher and/or school counselor immediately if you notice difficulties with homework, or would like to request special accommodations. *This will be done at the discretion of each teacher. If a student is absent for more than two days due to an extended illness, teachers will provide requested work. Once the request for work is made, please allow 24 hours for the work to be provided by the teacher. Requested work may be picked up in the Main Office.*

Physical Education Restrictions

If a student is unable to participate in physical activity for more than three days due to illness or injury, a note from a physician must be submitted to the school nurse stating the reason and length of time the student is to be excused. All notes must go to the nurse and the nurse can make arrangements to help the student during the day to and from class.

SAFETY & SECURITY

Security/Fire Drills and Procedures

New Jersey State requires that every school conduct **at least one security drill and fire drill per month**. There are important safety measures in place in the event of an emergency. All safety plans will be shared and taught to all students during the opening of the school year.

Threats of Violence or Violent Acts

All reported threats of violence will be investigated. All threats will be taken seriously and the proper authorities will be notified. Students found making threats or engaging in violent behavior may be subject to suspension/expulsion, evaluation by a psychiatrist, and police intervention.

Weapons

To the Parent or Guardian:

- The Board of Education, administration, and professional staff of the Montgomery Township School District stand united in their expression of intolerance for the presence of weapons in our schools. We believe that our schools must be safe and free from the danger that the presence of a weapon creates.
- In accordance with Board of Education [Policy #5611](#) and [Policy #5613](#) and the agreement with the Montgomery Township Law Enforcement Agency, students who are found possessing a weapon in school, on school grounds, or in school buses will be subject to immediate disciplinary action including, but not limited to in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension or expulsion from school. In addition, criminal charges may be filed with the Montgomery Police Department.
- **Any type of gun, loaded or unloaded, classification of knife, or any foreign object determined by administration as a possible weapon falls under the guidelines explained above.** A weapon is defined as any instrument of offense or defense which is capable of inflicting injury or death to someone.

In accordance with Board Policy and in agreement with Montgomery Township Law Enforcement, students who are found possessing a weapon in school, on school grounds, or on school transportation will be subject to suspension or expulsion. In addition, criminal charges may be filed with the Montgomery Police Department.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- **Guns** - Loaded or unloaded revolvers, BB guns, pellet guns, stun guns, air guns, dart guns, rifles, or shotguns, any device capable of firing a solid projectile, flammable or explosive substance, including pepper spray and mace.
- **Knives** - Pocket Knives, hunting knives, switchblades, box cutters, etc.
- **Other** – Pipes, tire irons, brass knuckles, slingshots, whips, bands studded with metal, or any flame producing device.

Student Identification Cards

All students must wear their school-issued student ID and lanyard at all times on the exterior of their clothing from the moment they enter the bus and/or walk into the building or on school property. IDs are essential as they will help identify our students when we have visitors to the building who may be of similar

age. At LMS, the student ID card will be used to enter and exit buses, to check books out of the library, to attend school sponsored events, and to make purchases in the cafeteria.

- **Students must have their ID throughout the school day, at all school-related activities (after school and on weekends), and they must be kept in good condition.**
- Failure to wear or present a school-issued student ID card may result in disciplinary consequences.
 - **For more details on the Student ID Cards and consequences, [please refer to the complete Student Identification Card Policy document.](#)**

Locker Policy

The Lower Middle School provides lockers for your use as a student, for holding books and personal belongings (valuable belongings must be left at home). This is especially important because backpacks are not to be used during the school day. Please enjoy using the locker, but please respect them. Know the following rules regarding locker use:

- *Jammed Lockers:* Before seeking office or custodial help with a jammed locker, you must first report to class on time and report the problem to your teacher. Lockers usually become jammed because heavy items, jackets, or bags become wedged in the door.
- *Property Rights:* Lockers are school property. Personal padlocks are not allowed; therefore, occasional locker checks will be made.
- Do not share your locker with anyone.
- Students must receive authorization from their teacher to change lockers; this request may not be approved and will be at the discretion of your homeroom teacher. Students are not permitted to use any other locker then the one assigned to them by their homeroom teacher
- Students may decorate another student's locker for birthdays but they must get permission from their homeroom teachers. This activity must be done before or after school under the supervision of a willing parent.
- The door on all lockers must be shut at all times. This requires that lockers are kept organized and that all but the necessary materials are kept from day to day in the locker. This may also require that a suitable backpack is purchased so the door has room to close.
- Backpacks must be stored in the locker throughout the school day. Drawstring bags may be utilized to assist students in carrying materials to class.
- Students may not access any lockers other than their own or touch any personal belongings or school supplies belonging to another student, for any reason.
- Use magnets for pictures and whiteboards, not tape. **Stickers are not permitted** inside or outside the locker.
- **Writing on lockers, inside or outside, is absolutely not permitted.**

Locker/Backpack Search & Seizure [Policy 5770](#)

The school administration (or staff/faculty designee) reserves the right to search all student lockers and/or backpacks at any point in order to maintain the safety and security of all students and staff in the building.

DISCIPLINE & RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Teachers are responsible for managing classroom behavior and ensuring students are aware of and understand school rules and regulations regarding discipline. Teachers will hold students accountable for violations of the Code of Conduct (school rules). If a student violates the Code of Conduct repeatedly, teachers may refer the student to administration and/or school counselor, who will utilize appropriate guidelines in determining appropriate consequences.

Restorative Practices provide a way for schools to strengthen community, build relationships among students and between students and staff, and increase the safety and productivity of the learning environment. Our goal as an LMS community is to support students as they learn and grow as individuals, using their knowledge, values and skills to function with self-esteem, self-respect, self-discipline, integrity and compassion as responsible members of society. We know that many students will make mistakes as they learn and grow, and the goal of Restorative Practices is to support students in reflecting up their actions, understanding the impact they have had on others, and repairing the relationships they have with the class and school community as a way to learn and grow from those mistakes.

When successfully integrated, Restorative Practices create physically and emotionally safe learning environments, thus developing our students' social and emotional well-being. The progression of our Restorative Practices follows a tiered approach:

- **Tier 1** (these offenses include behaviors that do not comply with the LMS Code of Conduct and disrupt the learning environment, but do not require having to leave the classroom);
- **Tier 2** (these offenses generally lack self/and or social awareness and violate the LMS Code of Conduct. These behaviors are of a more serious nature and will be referred to the office);
- **Tier 3** (these offenses are of a serious nature, illegal and/or threatening to the health and well-being of others. These behaviors will be referred to the office and authorities as appropriate).

The chart below provides examples of Code of Conduct violations within the tiers, as well as examples of teacher and administrator disciplinary actions. *This list is not exhaustive, but intended to provide clarity into the discipline processes. Please reach out directly to the administration if you have any questions about this list.*

TIER 1: These offenses generally include behaviors that do not comply with the LMS Code of Conduct, disrupt the learning environment, but do not require having to leave the classroom. At this level, teachers will provide interventions for individual students and the classroom community.	
<p><u>Possible Behaviors</u> may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disrespect towards peers/teacher ● Dress code violations ● Misuse of technology ● Lateness to class ● Running in the hallway ● Loss of student ID (first time) ● Any other student behavior that disrupts student learning, peer learning, or the classroom community 	<p>Teachers will remediate these behaviors. This may include (<u>but is not limited to</u>)...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher-student conference ● Letter of apology ● Loss of privilege ● Phone call/email to parent/guardian ● Other consequence as appropriate, according to teacher discretion

TIER 2: These offenses generally lack self/and or social awareness that violate the LMS Code of Conduct and have a significant impact on another student or the classroom. These behaviors are of a more serious nature and will be referred to the office.

Possible Behaviors may include, but are not limited to:

- Violations of Tier 1 behaviors (3+ times)
- Academic integrity violations
- Inappropriate use of technology (in accordance with LMS Code of Conduct)
- Harassment, fighting, intimidation or bullying of any school community member
- Loss of student ID (2+ times)
- Any other serious violation of the LMS Code of Conduct

Remediation of behavior will be supervised by the Vice Principal, Principal, and/or Guidance Team. This may include (but is not limited to)...

- Restorative conference / mediation
- Solution based action plan to rectify behavioral impact
- Communication with parent, phone call
- Referral for counseling
- Other consequence and remediation as appropriate, according to administrative discretion

TIER 3: These offenses are of a serious nature, illegal and/or threatening to the health and well-being of the LMS community. These behaviors will be referred immediately to the office.

Possible Behaviors may include, but are not limited to:

- Violations of Tier 1 & 2 behaviors (3+ times)
- HIB
- Assault with injury
- Leaving school grounds
- Weapon/Explosive device
- Any unlisted offense to be decided by the administrator

Remediation of behavior will be supervised by the Vice Principal, Principal, and/or Guidance Team. This may include (but is not limited to)...

- Referral for counseling
- Referral to outside agencies/law enforcement
- Removal from class for Restorative conference / mediation
- Suspension
- Any other consequence and remediation as appropriate, according to administrative discretion

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Bus assignments and bus seats are assigned alphabetically by the Transportation Supervisor, Mr. Dwayne Washington, and may be changed by the Transportation Department or school administrators at any time during the school year – parents will be notified in extreme cases as determined by the school and transportation personnel. **Students are not authorized to ride any bus other than their assigned buses, and must board and get off the bus at their assigned stops. ALL school rules apply while riding the school bus.**

Bus Regulations and Safety Procedures: [Regulation #8602](#)

1. The bus driver is in full charge of the bus. Any situation that needs attention should be reported to the bus driver. Please be mindful that the drivers are focused on the safety of every rider, and should not be distracted while driving unless an emergency is being reported.
2. Be at your designated “pick-up” stop 5 to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time.
3. Wait for the bus to come to a FULL STOP before trying to board or get off the bus.
4. Be respectful of neighborhood lawns and property. **Student behavior reflects upon the reputation of family and school.**
5. For personal safety, do not put hands, arms, and/or heads out of bus windows.
6. **Food is not permitted** to be eaten on the bus at any time.
7. Keep the bus neat and clear of all trash. Avoid damaging bus seats and other equipment.
8. Never throw anything out of the bus windows or door.
9. Once you are seated on the bus immediately put your seatbelt on.
10. Profanity, bullying, harassment, and the use of substances will not be permitted on the bus.
11. Remember that riding a school bus is a privilege. State law supports that: *Pupils may be excluded from the bus for disciplinary reasons by the school administrators or other designee, and parents shall provide for transportation to and from school during the period of such exclusion.*
12. The Transportation Department has installed video cameras on some of the buses in order to assist the drivers and the Administration with the management of student behavior.

For more information about the [MTSD Department of Transportation, please visit the district website.](#)