



# POLSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

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## *STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK*

# 2023–2024

### **Vision:**

*Striving for Excellence -  
Everyone, Every Day!*

### **Mission:**

Our Mission is to be a safe, thriving, and dynamic educational environment that teams with families and the community to inspire self-directed learners in an interconnected world.

## CORE VALUES

*We believe...*

**P**artnerships allow parents, communities, and schools to support one another.

**R**elationships inspire mutual respect and are at the heart of success.

**I**ntegrity builds honesty and trust.

**D**iversity embraces individuality and enriches our community.

**E**xcellence promotes high expectations and academic rigor.

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## INTRODUCTION

### TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS

The Polson Middle School Student and Parent Handbook contains information that students and parents are likely to need during the school year. Throughout the handbook, the term “the student’s parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please note that references to policy codes are included to help parents confirm current policy. A copy of the District’s Policy Manual is available on the school website.

This handbook has been prepared to provide the best possible guidance for Polson Middle School students and parents. The contents of the handbook have been incorporated as Polson Public Schools Administrative Regulations. PMS administration is required to enforce these regulations and is given the discretion needed to address special circumstances as they arise. Because it is impossible to foresee all situations that arise, this handbook empowers the administration to take disciplinary action for any behavior which violates the spirit, philosophy or code of conduct of Polson Middle School, even though not specified in the handbook. It is the student and parent's responsibility to know, understand, and comply with the policies listed in this handbook. If the student or parent has a question or concern, please contact an administrator.

### ADMINISTRATION'S WELCOME TO STUDENTS

On behalf of the entire Pirate community, we want to welcome you to the 2023-2024 school year at Polson Middle School. We are honored to serve as your administrative team and are excited for the opportunities this year will bring. PMS has a defined set of core values that are represented by the acronym PRIDE. We believe in Partnerships, Relationships, Integrity, Diversity, and Excellence. It is our hope that you will embrace the many opportunities that are afforded to you at PMS.

Kipp Lewis, Principal      Luke Mills, Assistant Principal

### ACCREDITATION

Polson Middle School has been granted full accreditation by the Montana Office of Public Instruction pursuant to the Montana Code Annotated 20-6-503.

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2023-2024

The Board of Trustees would like to extend an invitation to students, parents and community members to come to board meetings throughout the school year and summer. We would also like to encourage you to share with us your concerns, ideas, and general comments. We will be available to listen to and we will provide guidance on how to get your concerns addressed through the proper channels.

<b>Chanel Lake</b> - Chair	<b>Alan Anderson</b> - Vice Chair	<b>Joanna Browning</b> - Trustee	<b>Devon Cox</b> - Trustee
- Trustee	<b>Tony Muzquiz</b> - Trustee	<b>Nathaniel Netzer</b> - Trustee	<b>Shane Orien</b> - Trustee

Polson Middle School - Administration - Counselors - Office Staff		
Principal	Kipp Lewis	(406) 883-6351 ext 301
Assistant Principal	Luke Mills	(406) 883-6335 ext 302
Administrative Assistant and Registrar	Katie Kvam	(406) 883-6335 ext 300
Attendance Secretary	Barb Scott	(406) 883-6335 ext 303
Secretary	Carissa Couture	(406) 883-6335 ext 304
Counselor	Loni Havlovick	(406) 883-6335 ext 355
Counselor	Nicole Greene	(406) 883-6335 ext 354
District Activities Director	Sean Dellwo	(406) 883-6351 ext 200

### **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA gives parents and students over eighteen (18) years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to a student's education records. However, the rights contained in this section are denied to any person against whom an order of protection has been entered concerning a student.

- The right to inspect and copy the student's education record within a reasonable time from the day the District receives a request for access. Students less than eighteen (18) years of age have the right to inspect and copy their permanent record.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, irrelevant, or improper.
- The right to prohibit disclosure of personally identifiable information (including "directory" information) contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA or state law authorizes disclosure without consent.
- The right to a copy of any school student record proposed to be destroyed or deleted.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

### **BACKPACKS**

Students are allowed to bring backpacks to school. Students will make use of their assigned locker to store backpacks and other personal items during the school day. Students are not to leave backpacks unattended in the cafeteria, commons, gym, library, or in other common areas of the building. Unattended backpacks and clothing bags will be taken to the main office.

### **CHILD CUSTODY**

The school recognizes that issues related to the legal and physical custody of students are complicated and can impact the student's educational experience. Parents and legal guardians of students are strongly encouraged to stay involved with their student's academic progress. Unless a court order decrees otherwise, either parent or a legal guardian may view educational records and attend school functions regarding the student. Official notices and report cards will be sent to the parent or legal guardian with primary physical custody of the student during the school year. It is the responsibility of the parent or legal custodian with primary physical custody to provide current copies of court orders to the school. Child visitation and exchange of custody should not take place during school hours or on school property. The school will assume no responsibility for enforcing visitation or custody orders and reserves the right to prohibit parents or legal guardians from entering school district property if their conduct becomes disruptive to the school environment. Concerns regarding custody and visitation should be directed to the school principal.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Polson Middle School is committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff and visitors. We work closely with national, state, and local safety officials-police, fire, emergency medical services, and public health-in order to ensure our school is well prepared for an emergency. Together, we have developed a comprehensive Emergency Response Plan that covers a wide variety of emergencies that serves as a guide to help staff and our public safety partners respond swiftly should a crisis occur in our school.

Fire drills, lockdown drills, and other emergency drills are a required part of the school routine. Everyone is to follow established procedures as routinely practiced.

Our campus is closed during all emergency situations, except to emergency personnel. No one will be allowed on or off campus during critical incidents unless directed by emergency or school personnel.

Students are asked to not use their cell phones so that phone lines are clear for emergency personnel.

Tampering in any way with emergency equipment, including the phone system, is considered to be a serious violation of school safety regulations and may result in a recommendation for expulsion.

During an emergency, it is critical that parents/guardians receive important information and directions from school officials before going to the school or scene of an emergency. You can be confident that accurate and timely information will be released to parents/guardians, the public, and the media during any school emergency.

Should PMS initiate an evacuation procedure, parents will be directed to a specific location where their student will be released to them. Remember, a student can only be released to an adult that is documented as an emergency contact.

If a school emergency occurs, a parent can get information and directions by doing one or all of the following:

- Tune in to radio stations 750am or 92.3fm
- Watch TV stations KCFW, KPAX and KECI
- Call School District #23 Administration Office at (406)883-6345
- Access the Polson Public Schools home page at <https://www.polson.k12.mt.us/>
- Go to the Parent Staging Area to sign out your student

## **EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Each parent or guardian must provide to the attendance office a current telephone number where the parent or designee of the parent can be reached in case of emergency. In the event that the parent can not be reached and immediate medical attention is required, the injured student may be taken directly to the hospital and treated by the physician on call. Please call (406)883-6351 to update phone numbers.

## **GYM LOCKERS**

Lockers and padlocks will be issued to students by the PE teacher or athletic coach. Students will only use school provided locks on their lockers. It is the student's responsibility to secure personal belongings in their gym locker. The school does not assume responsibility for lost or stolen articles. Students will not leave money or other valuables unattended in the gym locker room. Commencing 30 minutes after the last period on the last day of school, the custodial staff will be cleaning lockers. All items must be removed from the student's locker before then.

## **LOCKERS**

Lockers are assigned by the administration. Lockers are provided for over-clothing, books, and materials. Each student may have their own locker. There will be no expectation of locker privacy on the part of the student. Lockers are school property and subject to inspection at any time. Students will lock their lockers. It is the student's responsibility to secure personal belongings in their locker. The school assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen articles. Students are responsible for any damage and/or any defacing of their locker.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

The lost and found is located in the A Door entryway. Articles left over 10 days are donated to charity.

## **PARENT ACCESS TO ATTENDANCE AND GRADE INFORMATION**

Parents can obtain current information on their son/daughter's progress by accessing our PowerSchool student information system through the Parent Portal. The online access provides information on attendance, most recent report card, GPA history, grade history for all high school classes, and current class schedule.

Powerschool link: <https://powerschool.polson.k12.mt.us/public/>

We have made every effort to ensure security. No names are included on the site and access to your student's information will be only by the use of an assigned ID and PIN number. Please contact the PMS Main Office at (406)883-6335 if you forget your ID or PIN numbers or need additional information. You can also access your student's progress on your phone by downloading the PowerSchool App from an App store.

## **PARENTAL OPT OUT OF PARTICIPATION**

Electronic information, services, and networks have become an essential part of the education process in our school. Instruction on using these resources along with instruction on the ethics and safety issues that accompany such resources is a part of our curriculum and our State education benchmarks. As a result students will be using computers and our District-wide network to learn about electronic information access, services and networks. If, for some reason, a parent does not want a son/daughter using these resources, please deliver a written objection to the principal. A notation will be made in our student records database of the preference to designate the student as a non-user of District electronic information, services, and network. All relevant staff will be notified.

## **PE UNIFORMS**

Students taking Health Enhancement classes must wear the approved PMS PE uniform. The uniform consists of a Gray or Purple Pirate T-shirt. Uniforms will be distributed during the PE class. Students who need replacement uniforms may be charged a fee. Gym clothing should be brought to the gym area and stored in a gym locker only during assigned Health Enhancement class time.

## **RESOLVING PARENT/TEACHER OR STUDENT/TEACHER DISAGREEMENTS**

Disagreements with teachers or complaints about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded. An employee who is the object of a complaint will be informed promptly and afforded the opportunity to present the facts as he/she sees them. Please use the following steps as a general guideline in resolving issues.

- Direct conversation between parent, student, and/or teacher. If a parent or student has a disagreement or misunderstanding with a teacher, the parent or student should address the concern to the specific teacher directly involved with the circumstances surrounding the concern.
- Meeting with parent, student, teacher, and/or school counselor. If a parent or student is not satisfied with the outcome of step 1, a meeting with the teacher, parent, student, and/or appropriate school counselor will be arranged at a mutually convenient time. This step is informal and verbal.
- Meeting with parents, student, teacher, and/or administrator. If a parent's concern is not satisfactorily resolved by completion of step 2, the parent should then refer this concern to an administrator in writing. The parent should submit a signed and dated statement of facts giving rise to this concern, the name of the accused teacher, and the remedy sought. A meeting with the teacher, parent, student, and/or administrator will be arranged at a mutually convenient time. The staff member has the right to be at all meetings with or without a representative as he/she so determines.

#### **SCHOOL CLOSURE**

The District Superintendent may order closure of schools in the event of extreme weather or other emergency in compliance with established procedures for notifying parents, students, and staff. Notification will be accomplished through local radio stations and the use of the district phone call system.

#### **SPECIAL EDUCATION/504**

The District provides free appropriate public education and necessary related services to all children with disabilities residing within the District, as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), provisions of Montana law, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The District ensures that students who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are provided with appropriate educational services. Parents should contact the Counseling Center for additional information on special education services.

#### **STAFF EMAIL**

All members of the administrative and educational staff have an assigned email account. To access staff through the use of e-mail, type in their first initial, last name, and then @polson.k12.mt.us (Example: Kipp Lewis, Principal, can be contacted via [klewis@polson.k12.mt.us](mailto:klewis@polson.k12.mt.us))

PMS Staff Directory Link: <https://www.polson.k12.mt.us/polson-middle-school/people>

#### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

Summer school provides an opportunity for students to repeat a course that they have failed. The district hosts a summer school program. Please contact your school counselor for more information.

#### **TEXTBOOKS**

The school furnishes all necessary textbooks for use in the classroom. Students will be assigned a textbook by their teacher. For identification, each book is numbered. Students may check out a textbook to take home on a case-by-case basis. Students will not be charged for normal wear. They will be charged replacement cost, however, as well as for excessive wear, unreasonable damage, or lost materials.

#### **TEXTING SERVICES**

The Polson Middle School web address is <https://www.polson.k12.mt.us/polson-middle-school>

Information provided includes announcements, activity schedules and student/parent resources. Staff and coaches may use other texting services like Remind to send information to students.

### ASSESSMENT AND TESTING

Polson Middle School uses a variety of assessments and testing which includes the following: SBAC and performance task testing.

### EXPLANATION OF GRADES

- Incomplete "I" will be used when a sickness or similar reason calls for more time. A maximum time of two weeks from the time report cards are issued will be allowed to make up the incomplete work. At the end of this time, a grade will be given.

GRADE	DEFINITION	GRADE	DEFINITION
<b>A</b>	Exemplary	<b>S</b>	Satisfactory
<b>B</b>	Above Average	<b>U</b>	Unsatisfactory
<b>C</b>	Average	<b>I</b>	Incomplete
<b>D</b>	Poor		
<b>F</b>	Failing		

### HOMEWORK

Developing homework skills and responsible, independent work habits is essential for academic and vocational success. At PMS we seek to maximize students' learning through a variety of excellent teaching and learning strategies. Homework can be a constructive tool in the teaching/learning process when geared to the needs and abilities of students. Purposeful assignments not only enhance student achievement, but also develop self-discipline and associated good working habits.

### REPORT CARDS

PMS has implemented PowerSchool, an online student information system for attendance and grade reporting. This enables the parent and student to check progress and attendance at any time via the internet. Midterm and Quarterly Report Cards are mailed to parents approximately one week after the last day of each term.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Participation in extracurricular activities, clubs, and organizations is a worthwhile endeavor to enhance students' development and educational experience. Specific eligibility and conduct rules may be adopted regarding participation in activities, clubs, and organizations.

**Please note:** Student clubs and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior — including consequences for misbehavior — that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the administrator will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization. It is the student's responsibility to make sure his or her current grades meet the activities' eligibility criteria.

**Athletic Policy:** [PMS Athletic Policy](#)

## ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION FEES

The activity participation fee is \$30 which includes a student activity pass. This fee is charged once a year, regardless of the number of seasons that a student participates in. Any student that has a financial hardship may request a scholarship from the PMS administration.

## CITIZENSHIP POLICY

All activity students shall abide by a code of ethics, which will earn them the honor and respect that participation and competition in interscholastic activities affords. Any conduct that results in dishonor to the student, the team, or the school will not be tolerated. Acts of unacceptable conduct tarnish the reputation of everyone associated with the school, community, and activities program. These acts include, but are not limited to, the following: theft, vandalism, taunting, baiting, hazing, fighting and/or other criminal acts. Potential consequences for these "unbecoming" acts may result in discipline including, but not limited to, suspension or removal from the activity, group, leadership position or team.

## CHEMICAL USE POLICY FOR EXTRA AND CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

Students participating in extra- and co-curricular activities, whether sponsored by the MHSA or not, shall not use, have in possession, sell, purchase, or distribute alcohol, tobacco products, alternative nicotine and vapor products, or illegal drugs or abuse prescription or non-prescription drugs during their extracurricular seasons. These rules are in effect twenty-four (24) hours a day during a specific season. If a student receives an MIP or is seen using tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drugs, the student will forfeit the privilege of participating in accordance with the activities. This policy applies to middle school students who are involved in the extra- and co-curricular activities program.

A student may not:

- Use, or have in possession drugs of any kind, or be present for any length of time at a gathering or location where the use of or the possession of drugs is illegally taking place during an activity season. Alcohol is considered a drug.
- Use, or have in possession, tobacco in any form at any time during an activity season.

Activity Season begins with the first official practice of the sport and ends with the arrival home following the last competitive event or when a parent or guardian requests that the student become his/her responsibility after the final competition for that sport.

## Penalties

- Possession or Consumption of Tobacco Products, Alternative Nicotine Products, or Vapor Products, will not be tolerated. Possession, use, or being under the influence of Alcohol and/or drugs will not be tolerated. Any athlete found to be using these substances, or in association with individuals using these substances, will receive suspension from play and/or may be removed from the program.

## FUNDRAISING

Student clubs or classes, outside organizations, and/or parent groups occasionally may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the Polson Middle School Administration 7 days before the event.



**ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is essential for the student to make the most of his or her education — to benefit from teacher-led activities, to build each day's learning on that of the previous day, and to grow as an individual.

- A student between the ages of 7 and 16 **must** attend school unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused. A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her sixteenth birthday is required to attend each school day.
- A student who persistently does not attend school for the day or any part of the school day equivalent to the length of one class period is truant and may be subject to disciplinary action. Truancy may also result in assessment of a penalty by a court of law against the student and his or her parents. The District's Attendance Officer may request a meeting with the truant student's parent or legal guardian to develop a truancy plan in the event of continued truancy.
- The principal or designee will attempt to contact a student's parent, guardian, or legal custodian by the end of the school day in order to inform him or her of the student's absence if no excuse has been offered. See Policy 3123.

When a student is absent from school, the parent/guardian must call the school [(406)883-6335] any time after 7:30 a.m. to notify the school of the absence. If the parent/guardian does not call, the district notify the parent/guardian when an absence has occurred. If contact has been made with the parent/guardian, it will not be necessary for the parent/guardian to send a written excuse with the student upon his/her returning to school, unless requested by the administration.

A student who is absent for any reason other than an unexcused absence should promptly make up specific assignments missed and/or complete additional in-depth assignments assigned by the teacher.

**ATTENDANCE PHILOSOPHY**

The learning experiences that take place in the classroom environment are an essential part of the educational process. Absences and tardiness tend to disrupt the continuity of the instructional program and the time lost from class is irretrievable, particularly in terms of opportunity for interaction and exchange of ideas between students and teachers. Missing class hinders a student's ability to master the subject matter, and this may be reflected in the grade. Grades earned in any course shall reflect the student's fulfillment of academic requirements, achievement, and daily participation. The administration does not condone absences that detract from our academics.

**STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY**

- Students are responsible for attending class.
- Students and parents/guardians are responsible for checking to make sure their attendance record is accurate in PowerSchool.
- Students are responsible for being in class and ready to start the lesson when the bell rings.
- Students are responsible for developing time management skills, a productive work ethic and accountability for successful preparation for graduation and beyond.

**PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY**

- Parents or guardians must call (406)883-6335, send a signed note, or email the attendance office to excuse an absence within 48 hours otherwise the absence is considered an unexcused absence.
- Parents or guardians must call (406)883-6335, send a signed note, or email the attendance office to excuse their student for an appointment. The pass must be obtained by the student from the attendance office prior to the student leaving school.
- Parents or guardians should make every attempt to schedule family vacations during school breaks.
- Parents or guardians can only excuse their own son/daughter.

**ATTENDANCE REPORTING TO PARENTS**

- Parents or guardians will be notified of an unexcused absence via the school's automated phone system, email, or a personal phone call.
- Parents or guardians can access their son/daughter's PowerSchool online progress report to view their complete attendance report and current grade status for each class at any time.

**TARDY PROCEDURE**

- It is the student's responsibility to be on time for class.
- Lunch detention can be assigned by the teacher for each unexcused tardy (X) after the first one. This is on a per class basis. Teachers will develop their tardy policy and include it in their class expectations.
- Students who do not attend assigned lunch detention may be referred to the administration.

- Excessive unexcused tardiness (X) will be referred to the administration.
- Students with valid excused late passes will not be considered tardy.

#### **MAKE-UP WORK PROCEDURES:**

Students are absent from school for a number of legitimate reasons. It is the policy of this school that the student, parent or guardian, and teacher work together to complete schoolwork due to activity related absences or excused absences. It is the student's responsibility to initiate and follow through with the work's completion. Make-up work for an excused absence is rated full value.

#### **UNEXCUSED (U) or SKIP/TRUANT (Z) CONSEQUENCES**

Unexcused and skip/truant absences will be dealt with by an administrator.

#### **SCHOOL-RELATED (R) ABSENCE**

A student qualifies for a school-related (R) absence if all four of the following criteria have been met:

- Students are supervised by School District employees or official designee
- Activity is a PMS activity
- Activity behavior is governed by PMS code of conduct

Examples of school-related (R) absences include:

- Band, choir, orchestra, speech, theater performances, school festivals
- Related school activities
- Field trips for school-sanctioned clubs, organizations and classes
- Curriculum related exams or school-sponsored assessments
- National, regional, state and local conventions for school-sanctioned clubs or classes

#### **REQUIREMENT FOR ACTIVITY PRACTICE OR COMPETITION**

A student may not participate in a practice or competition on the day of an absence unless the PMS Administration has granted prior approval. A student may not, under any circumstances, take part in practice or competition on a day he/she has been suspended or is truant from school. A student who has in-school or out-of-school suspension will not be allowed to practice and compete. A second out of school suspension will result in removal from the team.

ATTENDANCE CODE DEFINITIONS		
CODE	LABEL	DEFINITION
A	Excused Absence	Absence verified by a parent or guardian. Non-MHSA sanctioned events would be considered excused absences.
B	Long-Term Illness/Hospitalization	Absence verified by a parent or guardian including documentation from a health care provider or doctor.
C	Cultural Absence	Absence verified by a parent or guardian related to a cultural event.
F	Bereavement	Death in the immediate family. Immediate family is defined as father, mother, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or grandparents.
H	In-school absence	Absence related to an in-school activity
I	Suspended Absence (In School)	Consequence assigned by a school administrator. Student will be allowed to receive credit for work or assignments missed.
K	SRO	Absence requested or verified by school resource officer.
L	Homebound	Student is unable to attend school due to their medical condition.
M	Administrator	Absence requested or verified by school administrator.
O	Appointment	Absence verified by a parent or guardian related to an appointment.
P	Medical/Dental Appointment	Absence verified by a parent or guardian related to a medical or dental appointment.

R	School Related Absence	Absence that meets the criteria for school related.
S	Suspended Absence (Out of School)	Consequence assigned by a school administrator.
T	Tardy	Students that arrive to class after the bell but before 5 minutes have passed.
U	Unexcused Absence	Unexcused absences occur when the student is absent from school and the school did not receive prior notification of the absence from the parent and or the parent did not contact the school regarding the absence within the two (2) day notification window.
V	Guidance Office	Absence requested or verified by school administrator.
W	Post-Secondary Visit	Absence verified by a parent or guardian or school official for a post-secondary school visit.
X	Unexcused Tardy	Students that arrive after the bell more than 5 minutes late to class without permission or authorization from the office or teacher.
Z	Truant/Skipping	Student that is verified as truant from class.

**PMS STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

In order for students to take advantage of available learning opportunities and to be productive members of our campus community, each student is expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy — even when others do not.
- Behave in a responsible manner and exercise self-discipline.
- Attend all classes, regularly and on time.
- Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class.
- Meet District or building standards of grooming and dress.
- Obey all building and classroom rules.
- Respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, and other District staff.
- Respect the property of others, including District property and facilities.
- Cooperate with or assist the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.

**BEHAVIOR - STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Polson Middle School expects students to be a credit to themselves, their families, and their school at all times. If the school is to function effectively and students are to be free to pursue their education, all students must accept responsibilities and meet certain expectations. Student behavior that interferes with the educational process or violates the rights or safety of others will not be tolerated. Students are expected to comply with school and classroom rules at all times.

**VIOLATION OF STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

A student is in violation of the Student Code of Conduct if the student engages in any inappropriate behavior, including but not limited to:

- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling tobacco or vapor products (tobacco includes, but is not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, snuff, smoking tobacco, smokeless tobacco, alternative nicotine product, or any other tobacco or nicotine innovation)
- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling alcoholic beverages.
- Using, possessing, distributing, purchasing, or selling illegal drugs or controlled substances, including marijuana, look-alike drugs, and drug paraphernalia.
- Using, possessing, controlling, or transferring a weapon in violation of the “Possession of a Weapon in a School Building” section of this policy.
- Using, possessing, controlling, or transferring any object that reasonably could be considered or used as a weapon.
- Disobeying directives from staff or disobeying rules governing student conduct.
- Using violence, force, coercion, intimidation or other comparable conduct toward anyone or urging other students to engage in such conduct.
- Causing or attempting to cause damage to, or stealing or attempting to steal, school property or another person’s property.
- Engaging in any activity that constitutes an interference with school purposes or an educational function or any other disruptive activity.
- Unexcused absenteeism.
- Use of vulgar and profane language or racial slurs
- Misconduct of any sort on any means of District transportation.
- Bullying, hazing, harassment (including sexual harassment), or intimidation, including cyberbullying and sexting.
- Forging any signature or making any false entry or attempting to authorize any document used or intended to be used in connection with the operation of a school.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Polson Middle School promotes and expects ethical behavior from all members of the Pirate community. Honesty and integrity are valued in all of our classrooms, programs, and activities. Dishonest and unethical behavior, such as lying or cheating, will not be tolerated at any time by anyone.

Teachers are granted authority, with the direction and advice of the administration, to exercise their good judgment in applying a range of academic consequences for violations of this policy. Only the administration has the authority to remove a student from a class with an “F” for repeated violations.

**ACADEMIC INSUBORDINATION**

It will be considered academic insubordination if a student refuses to attend class, work on assignments, or participate in class activities. Students have the right to fail, but they have the responsibility to engage in the educational process. Consequences may be assigned by the administration.

### **ACCESSORY TO SERIOUS VIOLATIONS**

A student who is an accessory to a serious offense is guilty of misconduct and can be punished just as if he had committed the offense. A student will not do anything that might cause, encourage, or assist a serious violation to take place.

### **ASSEMBLY CONDUCT**

An assembly is an extension of the classroom. The same rules of conduct that apply in the classroom apply in the assembly. Out of respect for fellow students and guests, every student is encouraged to be attentive, responsive, and appreciative in assembly programs. Student conduct must not be an embarrassment to anyone, especially to those who have a part in the program.

### **APPLICABILITY OF SCHOOL RULES AND DISCIPLINE**

To achieve the best possible learning environment for all our students, Polson Middle School's rules and discipline will apply:

- On, or within sight of, school grounds before, during or after school hours or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- Off school grounds at a school sponsored activity or event, or any activity or event that bears a reasonable relationship to school;
- Traveling to and from school or a school activity, function or event; and
- Anywhere, including virtual networks, if conduct may reasonably be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a staff member, an interference with school purposes or an educational function, or a threat to the safety and welfare of the student population, or conduct that detrimentally affects the climate or efficient operations of the school.

### **CONSIDERATION OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

School authority may consider extenuating circumstances prior to dispensing disciplinary action. Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to: seriousness of the offense, program placement, attitude and age of student, pattern of conduct, degree of cooperation, attendance record, grades, and/or other educationally relevant circumstances. School administrators shall maintain discretionary powers to interpret the Student Handbook and issue corrective measures in each individual case. These administrators shall be the final authority on discipline in the building.

### **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

No person who is employed or engaged by the District may inflict, or cause to be inflicted, corporal punishment on a student. Corporal punishment does not include, and district personnel are permitted to use, reasonable force as needed to maintain safety for other students, school personnel, or other persons, or for the purpose of self-defense.

### **CORRECTIVE ACTIONS AND PUNISHMENT**

All students shall submit to the reasonable rules of the school. Refusal to comply with written rules and regulations established for the governing of the school shall constitute sufficient cause for a discipline consequence that may include suspension by the school administration or expulsion by the School Board. A staff member or administrator has the authority to hold a student accountable for the student's behavior.

### **CROWD DISPERSION**

Students gathered around or drawn to an illegal activity (example: fighting) must immediately disperse or they may be found guilty of promoting an act that is disruptive, distracting, incompatible to the school mission, or harmful. Disciplinary action taken will depend on the circumstances and severity of the incident.

### **CYBER-SPEECH**

The administration may impose discipline consequences on cyber-speech occurring outside of school when it constitutes a threat—an immediate, unconditional threat of violence directed at a person(s), and where conduct is directly linked to school, OR created or was reasonably expected to cause a material and substantial disruption to school's operation or environment. This would also include the use of the school name and/or logo on a site that was not compatible with the mission of the school.

### **DEMONSTRATIONS**

Demonstrations which interrupt classes or school operations are not allowed. Students who participate in demonstrations which interrupt classes or the operation of the school will face disciplinary consequences. Students who have a concern should visit with a teacher, school counselor, or administrator.

### **DISALLOWED AND/OR ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES**

The promotion of or involvement in any illegal activities at school or during school activities will be referred to law enforcement. Students found guilty will have a discipline consequence that may include suspension or expulsion. Action will be taken on all illegal

activities within the line of sight of PMS. Students found guilty of certain illegal activities may also receive an “enhanced” sentence if the crime was committed in, on, or within 1,000 feet of the real property of a public or private elementary or secondary school.

## **DISCIPLINE AND DUE PROCESS**

Students who violate District policies, rules, and directives are subject to discipline at the discretion of Polson Middle School Administration. Discipline may include referrals to the SRO, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion. Administrators have the discretion to impose, or in the case of expulsion, recommend, the level of discipline deemed appropriate for the misconduct. An administrator has the authority to suspend a student for up to ten (10) school days per event.

### **Suspension**

In the absence of policy the students or activity group will be subject to the determinations which the activity sponsor or administration deem reasonable and prudent. After due process in any instances of misbehavior, the principal, assistant principal, or his/her designee may administer what he/she considers appropriate disciplinary action. **Discipline should not be confused with punishment. The goal of discipline is to help students mature as individuals, with mature attitudes and socially acceptable standards of conduct.**

### **Suspension Procedure Policy 3300P**

Students may be suspended with an informal hearing consisting of:

1. Notice will be given to students and parents in a student handbook of conduct that may result in suspension. The student handbook is not an exclusive list of conduct that may result in suspension.
2. A student’s parent/guardian must be notified of the suspension. Notice will include one of the following:
  - An oral or written notice of the student’s conduct;
  - An oral or written explanation of the district’s evidence of the conduct;
  - An opportunity for the student to respond;
  - An oral or written explanation of the proposed suspension including the length of the suspension;
  - And an oral or written notice of any record that will be kept of the suspension.

The student has the right to have an oral or written notice of the charges against him/her and if denied them, an explanation of the evidence the authorities have and an opportunity to present his/her side of the story, unless the student’s presence poses a continuing danger to person, property, or disruption to the academic process, in which case the student may be immediately removed from school. In such a case, notice of charges and a hearing shall follow as soon as practical. At the request of the parents, the Superintendent will review the appropriateness of the suspension. The decision of the Superintendent is final.

An administrator has the authority to extend a suspension for an additional ten (10) school days. Prior to extending the suspension beyond the original length not to exceed ten days, the administrator must hold an informal hearing with the student and determine that the student’s immediate return to the school would be detrimental to the health, welfare, or safety of others, or would be disruptive to the educational process.

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion is any removal of a student for more than twenty (20) school days without the provision of educational services. Only the Board has the authority to expel a student after holding a hearing that provides the student with an opportunity to be heard. After an investigation into the student’s conduct, the administrator must send a written notice to the parents regarding the recommendation to expel the student, the specific charges against the student and supporting evidence, a description of the rule or regulation broken, the date, time, and location of the board hearing, a copy of the Board’s procedure, and a description of the student’s and parents’ rights at the hearing.

### **Students With Disabilities**

Students with rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may be suspended in the same manner as students without those rights or expelled under certain circumstances, but prior to the imposition of either penalty, the District must follow all procedural requirements of those Acts, including holding a manifestation determination meeting when necessary, as required by these Acts.

## **DISRUPTION OF SCHOOL OPERATIONS**

No person shall disrupt or obstruct any school program, activity, or meeting, or threaten to do so, or commit, threaten to imminently commit or incite another to commit any act that will disturb or interfere with or obstruct any lawful task, process or procedure, of any student, official employee, or invitee of the District. Disruptive, distracting, incompatible, or harmful actions will result in a disciplinary consequence. Disciplinary action taken will depend on the circumstances and severity of the incident.

The grounds for disciplinary action apply whenever the student's conduct is reasonably related to school or school activities, including, but not limited to:

- On, or within sight of, school grounds before, during, or after school hours or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group;
- Off school grounds at a school-sponsored activity, or event, or any activity or event which bears a reasonable relationship to school;
- Traveling to and from school or a school activity, function, or event.
- Anywhere, if the conduct may reasonably be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of a staff member, or an interference with school purposes or an educational function.

#### **FAILURE TO RESPOND TO ADMINISTRATOR'S REQUEST TO SEE A STUDENT**

Students must, upon request, meet with an administrator. Failure to respond will result in disciplinary action. School officials have the right to talk to a student without a parent present.

#### **FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION**

Because field trips are an extension of the classroom, all school rules apply. Transportation to and from the site must be authorized by the school.

#### **FILMING FIGHTS OR ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES**

Students who videotape fights, other illegal activities, or school and classroom disruptions may be found guilty of promoting an act that is incompatible to the school mission or is harmful. Disciplinary action taken will depend on the circumstances and severity of the incident.

#### **GUN-FREE SCHOOLS/FIREARMS**

In accordance with the Gun Free School Act, any student who brings a firearm onto school property shall be expelled for a period of not less than one calendar year unless the Board of Trustees has authorized the school administration in writing to modify the requirement for expulsion, including eliminating the requirement for expulsion, on a case-by-case basis.

An administrator may immediately suspend a student if there is cause to believe the student brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school prior to any board hearing on a recommendation for expulsion. If there is a recommendation to expel a student for bringing a firearm to school or possessing a firearm at school, the trustees shall notify the adult student or parent/guardian of a minor student in a clear and timely manner that the student may waive his or her privacy right by requesting the hearing be held in public and may invite other individuals to attend the hearing. At a due process hearing on the recommendation for expulsion due to a student bringing a firearm to school or possessing a firearm at school, there shall be a presentation of a summary of the information leading to the allegations and an opportunity for the student to respond to the allegations. The Board of Trustees is permitted to expel a student only when the trustees determine that the student knowingly (had knowledge of the facts) brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school.

#### **HALL PASSES**

A student must be in their room of instruction during class time. A pass from their teacher must be used if the student leaves the classroom during class time. Students are not to leave the classroom during the first or last 10 minutes of class unless deemed an emergency by the supervising teacher or adult.

#### **LIGHTERS, MATCHES, E-CIGARETTES (VAPES), LASER POINTERS, WATER-TRANSMITTING DEVICES**

Students have no appropriate reason to carry cigarette lighters, matches or e-cigarettes on the campus. Possession and use of laser pointers and water transmitting devices is prohibited. Offenders shall be subject to confiscation of the object and disciplinary action.

#### **PHYSICAL ASSAULT (FIGHTING)**

Fighting at or near PMS may result in suspension and possible expulsion. Depending on the severity of the incident, law enforcement may be contacted. The following situations will result in suspension:

- Fighting after attempts have been made to resolve a specific conflict.
- An unprovoked student attack on another student.
- Bringing a non-school related issue to school which results in a fight.

#### **POLICE INVOLVEMENT**

School officials are not required to initiate or complete due process procedures prior to notifying law enforcement authorities. If the authorities are notified, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted by telephone, letter, or in person. Any action taken by the authorities is separate from and in addition to action taken by the school. State law requires the school to permit a student to be taken into legal custody.

## **REPORTING**

All complaints about behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. Any student who has knowledge of conduct in violation of this policy or feels he/she has been a victim of hazing, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, in violation of this policy is encouraged to immediately report his/her concerns to the principal or the District Administrator, who have overall responsibility for such investigations. This report may be made anonymously. A student may also report concerns to a teacher or school counselor, who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate District official.

## **RETALIATION AND REPRISAL**

Retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports or is thought to have reported a violation, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy, whether or not a complaint is substantiated. False charges shall also be regarded as a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.

## **SELF-IDENTIFICATION**

Students must, upon request, stop and identify themselves to School District personnel or authorities when on or near school property, on school buses, or at any school-sponsored activity. Failure to self-identify or provide correct information in a timely manner will result in disciplinary action.

## **SKATEBOARDS, ROLLER BLADES, ROLLER SKATES**

The use of skateboards, scooters, roller blades, or roller skates on school property is prohibited.

## **STATE LAWS**

We expect all Polson Middle School students and staff to support and comply with state laws. The following two regulations have special application to our school setting:

- State Constitution Article X: "It is the goal of the people to establish a system of education which will develop the full potential of each person. Equality of educational opportunity is guaranteed to each person of the state..."
- Statutes (MCA) Title 49 Human Rights: "The right to be free from discrimination because of race, creed, sex, religion, color, physical or mental handicap, age or national origin is recognized as and declared to be a civil right..."

## **STUDENT CONDUCT TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

The school assumes authority over the conduct of students to and from school when on school grounds, in school transportation, and on supervised school excursions. Administration will cooperate with parents/guardians, property owners, and police in cases of problems or hazards created by students while going to and from school and during lunch time. Such cooperation may involve, but is not limited to, identification of students, counseling with students, notification of police, contact with parents/guardians, and possible disciplinary action.

## **STUDENT USE OF BUILDINGS**

No student shall use school facilities without direct school personnel supervision. This includes use of the gym, wrestling and weight-cardio areas, theater, performance hall, media studio, porches and classrooms. Non-curriculum-related school student organizations may conduct meetings on school premises without intervention on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the meeting. Refer to School District 23 Board Policy 3233 for additional criteria that must be met. Although the school assumes no sponsorship of these kinds of meetings, all meetings held on school premises must be scheduled and approved by the administration.

## **TRESPASSING**

Persons coming on campus whom the administration deem to have no legitimate business may be subject to trespassing charges and will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

## **VIDEO SURVEILLANCE**

Video surveillance will occur on school property to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors, and to safeguard the buildings, grounds, and equipment. Video cameras will be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the administration. Video recordings may become a part of a student's educational record.

## **YEAR END ACTIVITIES**

Participation in year end activities including but not limited to field trips (e.g.-Silverwood), classroom celebrations and special events are a privilege. Student behavior over the course of the school year will be reviewed by the administration to determine eligibility. Exclusionary factors include but are not limited to: Substance violations, repeated disrespect to staff, fighting, repeated disruptions, leaving campus without permission, unauthorized filming.



### **BULLYING / HARASSMENT / INTIMIDATION / HAZING**

Bullying (including cyberbullying), harassment, intimidation, or hazing, by students, staff, or third parties, is strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated.

All complaints about behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated.

Retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports or is thought to have reported a violation, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry.

For additional information, please see Policy 3226.

### **CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT**

Student possession and use of cellular phones, music devices, earbuds and other electronic signaling devices on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, and while under the supervision and control of school district employees is a privilege.

Students are prohibited from operating a cell phone or other electronic device (or camera embedded in such device) while in a locker room, bathroom, or any other location where the privacy rights of others may be violated. This includes the videoing of associated misconduct, fighting, harassment of others, medical emergencies, or instructional delivery of any adult throughout PSD.

Students may not use cell phones or other electronic signaling devices during classes unless such use is under the direction of certified staff for educational purposes.

5/6th Students may use cellular phones, music devices, earbuds and other electronic signaling devices in common areas before school and after school. These devices are to be stored in the students locker during the school day.

7/8th Students may use cellular phones, music devices, earbuds and other electronic signaling devices in common areas before school, after school, during passing periods, and during lunch.

Unauthorized possession or use of these devices is grounds for confiscation. Repeated unauthorized use will result in disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the unauthorized use, the student's parents and/or law enforcement may be contacted and the student's cell phone may be searched. Therefore, unauthorized use is grounds for confiscation of the device by school officials, including classroom teachers, and may result in disciplinary action. Devices may be confiscated by the teacher and may be turned in to the main office. Violations are cumulative for the school year.

- First Documented Offense: Confiscation by teacher, returned to student at the end of the school day.
- Second Documented Offense: Confiscation by teacher, returned to student at the end of the school day, teacher-parent contact.
- Third Documented Offense: Confiscated phone turned in to the main office, parent contact, confiscation until parent picks up device.

\*Refusal to turn over the device to a school administrator will result in 1 day OSS.

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

To protect children from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents of a student with a communicable or contagious disease should phone the school nurse or principal so that other students who **may** have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

These diseases include, but are not limited to:

Amebiasis	Hepatitis	Mumps	Shigellosis
Campylobacteriosis	Influenza	Pinkeye	Streptococcal disease
Chickenpox	Measles (Rubeola)	Ringworm of the scalp	Invasive Tuberculosis
Diphtheria	Meningitis	Rubella (German Measles)	Whooping Cough (Pertussis)
Gastroenteritis	Coronavirus	Scabies	

## COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed simply — by a phone call or a conference with the teacher. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the District has adopted a Uniform Complaint Procedure policy for most complaints (Policy 1700) with the exception of complaints/concerns regarding sexual harassment and/or disability discrimination.

If a student or parent believes that the Board, its employees, or agents have violated their rights, he or she may file a written complaint with any District Principal or Supervisor under the applicable grievance procedure. If still unresolved, the matter generally may be referred to the Superintendent. Under some circumstances, the District provides for the complaint to be presented to the Board of Trustees in the event the matter cannot be resolved at the administrative level.

Some complaints require different procedures. Any building office or the Superintendent's office can provide information regarding specific processes for filing complaints. Additional information can also be found in Policy 1700, available in any principal's and Superintendent's offices.

**Students shall use the Title IX Grievance Procedure to address complaints/concerns about sexual harassment. A copy of the Title IX Grievance Procedures can be obtained on the District's website ([polson.k12.mt.us](http://polson.k12.mt.us)) or any District or school office or by contacting the Title IX Coordinator.**

**Students shall use the Section 504 Grievance Procedure to address complaints/concerns about disability discrimination. A copy of the Section 504 Grievance Procedures can be obtained on the District's website ([polson.k12.mt.us](http://polson.k12.mt.us)) or any District or school office or by contacting Scott Boen, HR Director, for Section 504/ADA discrimination complaints.**

## COMPUTER RESOURCES

Computer resources, including the District's electronic networks, are an integral part of the District's instructional program. Use of these resources is a privilege, not a right. Students have no expectation of privacy in material that is stored, transmitted, or received via the District's electronic networks or the District's computers. General rules for behavior and communications apply when using the District's computer resources. Students must sign the *Internet Access Agreement* prior to being authorized to use the District's computer resources. For additional information, see Policy 3612.

## DRESS AND GROOMING

Polson Middle School respects students' rights to express themselves in the way they dress. All students who attend Polson Middle School are also expected to respect the school community by dressing appropriately for a K-12 educational environment. Student attire should facilitate participation in learning as well as the health and safety of students and the adults that supervise them. This policy is intended to provide guidance for students, staff, and parents.

### Minimum Requirements:

- Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to the bottom of acceptable garment length. Tops must have shoulder straps or sleeves. Rips or tears in clothing should be lower than the acceptable garment length.
- Shoes must be worn at all times and should be safe for the school environment.
- See-through or mesh garments must be worn with appropriate coverage underneath that meet the minimum requirements of the dress code.
- Headgear including hats, hoodies, caps, and sunglasses are not allowed unless permitted for religious, medical, cultural or other reasons by school administration. Teachers are granted authority, with the direction and advice of the administration, to exercise reasonable judgment in application of this policy.
- Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.
- Clothing may not depict, imply, advertise, or advocate illegal, violent, or lewd conduct, weapons, or the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances.
- Clothing may not display or imply vulgar, discriminatory, or obscene language or images.
- Clothing may not state, imply, or depict hate speech/imagery targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected classification.
- Clothing and accessories that endanger students or staff safety may not be worn.
- Flags are not allowed to be worn as capes.
- Apparel, jewelry, accessories, bandanas, tattoos, or manner of grooming that, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark or any other attribute, denotes membership in a gang that advocates illegal or disruptive behavior is prohibited.

***The administration or designee reserves the right to determine what constitutes appropriate dress.*** Measures will be taken by the administration and or designee to correct dress code violations, which may include sending the student home to change clothes. Subsequent dress code violations will result in further disciplinary actions.

## FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds and are at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, yearbooks, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the District.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the Polson Middle School Administration.

## FOOD SERVICES

Polson Middle School participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program and offers students nutritionally-balanced and appealing meals daily. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need. Polson Middle School will make every effort to prevent the overt identification of students participating in the free and reduced-price meals by utilizing electronic identification and payment systems. Contact the PMS Main Office at (406)883-6335 to apply.

MEAL CHARGES		
Full Pay Price	Breakfast - \$1.80	Lunch - \$2.75
Reduced Price	Breakfast - \$0.30	Lunch - \$0.40
Adults	Breakfast - \$2.50	Lunch - \$4.25

Please refer to Policies 2510 and 8200 for additional information regarding the District's wellness program and its meal charging policy.

## HOMELESS STUDENTS

In accordance with federal and state law and regulations, the District will provide homeless students with access to the instructional programming that supports achievement of the content standards and to other services for which they are eligible. Students shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless, nor shall they be stigmatized in any way. The District will determine, according to the best interest of the child whether the child will be enrolled in the school of origin or in the public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child is actually living are eligible to attend. In determining the best interest of the child the District will, to the extent feasible, keep the child in the school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent.

If the child is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian, the homeless liaison will assist in placement and enrollment decisions, with the views of the child taken into consideration.

The District shall immediately enroll the homeless child, even if the child into the selected school even if the parent/child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, immunization records, evidence of residency, or other documentation.

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to services available to other students in the school system including, but not limited to, transportation services; educational services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, and students with limited English proficiency; vocational and technical programs; preschool programs; before and after school-care programs; and school meals/nutrition programs.

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled.

## IMMUNIZATION

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical or religious reasons, the student will not be immunized. The immunizations required are: diphtheria, pertussis, rubeola (measles), rubella, mumps, poliomyelitis, varicella and tetanus. Haemophilus influenza type B is required for students under age five (5). Except for

those vaccinations required by law, the District will not discriminate against a student by denying or withholding educational opportunities based upon the student's vaccination status.

A student who transfers into the District may photocopy immunization records in the possession of the school of origin. The District will accept the photocopy as evidence of the immunization. Within thirty (30) days after a transferring student ceases attendance at the school of origin, the District must receive the original immunization records for the student who transfers into the District.

If a student's religious beliefs conflict with the requirement that the student be immunized, the student must present a notarized form signed by the student (or by the parent, if the student is a minor) stating that immunization conflicts with the religious tenets and practices of the parents and student. This certificate will be maintained as part of the student's immunization records.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a health care provider who is licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by the laws of any state or Canada to provide health care under Montana law, is authorized within the provider's scope of practice to administer immunizations to which the exemption applies, and has previously provided health care to the student seeking the exemption or has administered an immunization to which the student has had an adverse reaction. This certificate must indicate the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition or circumstances which contraindicate immunization. This certificate will be maintained as part of the student's immunization records. For further information, see Policy 3413.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

### **Questioning of Students**

Law enforcement or social service workers must contact students through the administrative office. Students will not usually be questioned or interviewed by law enforcement or other lawful authorities while at school. When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities, however, wish to question or interview a student at school or the principal requests that the student be interviewed at school:

- The principal shall verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority.
- If the interview is not at the request of the principal, the principal shall ascertain the authority of law enforcement to question or interview the student at the school. If the interview is by court order or other exigencies exist (concern about loss/damage of evidence, flight from jurisdiction, or health, safety, or welfare of the student or other students or staff), the principal has the discretion to allow the interview to take place. Otherwise, if law enforcement can reasonably interview the student at a time when the student is not in school, the principal may, absent a court order or warrant, deny the request for an immediate interview of a student.
- The principal will make reasonable efforts to notify parents unless the officer produces a court order prohibiting the notification of the parents.
- In the event that a parent cannot be present or cannot be reached, the principal will observe the interview.
- Law enforcement must comply with all legal requirements regarding notification of parents and consent prior to interviewing students.
- Social service workers may be permitted to interview students at a school consistent with Montana law. The principal will observe the meeting if the social service worker declines to notify the parents.

### **Students Taken into Custody**

State law requires the District to permit a student to be taken into legal custody by a law enforcement officer or probation officer to comply with a lawful court order, a warrant for arrest, or a law enforcement determination that probable cause exists for the arrest. To the extent practicable, the arrest should be conducted out of the view of other students in the administration offices. A social service worker may take custody of a student with a lawful court order or under the powers of MCA § 41-3-301.

The principal will immediately notify the Superintendent and will make reasonable attempts to notify a parent unless the officer or official produces a court order prohibiting the notification of the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a custody action, notification will most likely be after the fact.

### **Service of Process**

At times, law enforcement may seek to serve a student with a subpoena or other legal documents (i.e., complaint, summons). Absent a court order, the principal has the discretion to determine whether service at school is disruptive to the educational environment. If service is directed by a court or is not disruptive to the educational environment, the principal will make reasonable attempts to contact the parents regarding the service. Where the principal has determined that service would be disruptive to the educational environment, the principal will make a reasonable attempt to coordinate with law enforcement to serve the student when school is not in session. Service on a student will be accomplished out of the view of other students in the administration offices.

## **MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

A student who must take prescription medicine during the school day that is necessary for his or her health and well-being must have a written authorization signed by the parents and the licensed health care provider allowing the dispensation of the medication. The student must bring the medicine in its original, properly labeled container, to the school nurse. The school nurse or school employee to whom the task is delegated pursuant to Montana law will either give the medicine at the proper times or give the student permission to take the medication as directed.

A student who has authorization to possess and self-administer medication must have completed and filed, with the office, a written order for self-administration of a medication from a licensed healthcare provider or dentist as well as written authorization from the parents for the self-administration. The administration may authorize, in consultation with medical personnel, a student with asthma, severe allergies, or anaphylaxis to possess and self-administer emergency medication from an epinephrine pen (EpiPen) or asthma inhaler. The written order and written authorization must be provided annually. For additional information, please see Policy 3416.

#### **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Polson School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination:

<p><b>Title IX Coordinator</b>  Name and/or Title*: HR Director  Address: 111 4th Ave E, Polson MT  Telephone Number: (406) 883-6355</p>	<p><b>Section 504/ADA Coordinator</b>  Name and/or Title*: SPED Director  Address: 111 4th Ave E, Polson MT  Telephone Number: (406) 883-6355</p>	<p><b>Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator</b>  Name and/or Title*: Superintendent  Address: 111 4th Ave E, Polson MT  Telephone Number: (406) 883-6355</p>
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\*OCR recognizes that including a person's name may result in an overly burdensome requirement to republish the notice if a person leaves the coordinator position. It is acceptable for a school district to identify its coordinator only through a position title.

#### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND RIGHTS**

Polson Middle School believes that the best educational result for each student occurs when all three partners are doing their best: the District staff, the student's parents, and the student. Such a partnership requires trust and much communication between home and school. To strengthen this partnership, every parent is urged to:

- Encourage his or her child to put a high priority on education and commit to making the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Review the information in the student handbook with his or her child and sign and return the acknowledgment form(s) and the directory information notice. A parent with questions is encouraged to contact Polson Middle School.
- Become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the District. Discuss with the counselor or principal any questions, such as concerns about placement, assignment, or early graduation, and the options available to the child.
- Monitor the child's academic progress and contact teachers as needed. Parents have the right to review their child's education records upon request.
- Attend scheduled conferences and request additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office at (406)883-6351 for an appointment. A teacher will usually arrange to return the call or meet with the parent during his or her conference period or at a mutually convenient time before or after school.
- Become a school volunteer. For further information, contact (406)883-6351.
- Participate in campus parent organizations. Parents have the opportunity to support and be involved in various school activities, either as leaders or in supporting roles. Parent organizations include: Polson Middle School Parent Council, CTE Advisory Committees, Pirate Booster Club.

#### **PROTECTION OF STUDENT RIGHTS**

##### **Surveys**

Parents have the right to inspect any survey or evaluation and refuse to allow their child to participate in such survey or evaluation.

##### **Instructional Materials**

Parents have the right to inspect instructional materials used as a part of their child's educational curriculum, within a reasonable time. This does not include academic tests or assessments.

##### **Collection of Personal Information from Students for Marketing**

The District will not administer or distribute to students any survey or other instrument for the purposes of collecting or compiling personal information for marketing or selling such information, with the exception of the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products/services for, or to, students or educational institutions.

Pursuant to federal law, the District will seek parental consent prior to and will not request, nor disclose, the identity of a student who completes any survey or evaluation (created by any person or entity, including the District) containing one or more of the following:

- Political affiliations.
- Mental and psychological problems
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior.

- Criticism of other individuals with whom the student or the student's family has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of students or the student's parent/guardian.
- Income, except when the information will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

## **RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL**

A student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day except with permission from the principal or designee and according to the building sign-out procedures. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning. A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the office or school nurse. The administrator or nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent. When in doubt as to custodial rights, the District will rely on the most recent information available in the student's records. A student will only be released with prior written permission from the custodial parent to a previously unauthorized adult unless an emergency situation justifies a waiver.

## **RELIGIOUS PRACTICES**

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. Students may also pray in groups and discuss their religious views with other students as long as they are not disruptive or coercive. The school will not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity. Student prayer, even if nonsectarian or non-proselytizing, will not be broadcast over the school public address system.

Students may study religions ancillary to the studies of human history and development and various national, cultural, and ethnic groups. This study will give neither preferential nor derogatory treatment to any religion or religious belief. The inclusion of religious music, symbols, art, or writings during instruction or in school programs or performances may occur where the religious content has a historical and/or independent educational purpose consistent with the approved curriculum. For additional information, please see Policy 2332.

## **SEARCHES AND SEIZURES**

To protect students, employees, and visitors from the serious risk to the health and safety of students posed by alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia, and weapons, which are compelling interests, it is necessary to conduct searches of persons and property under certain, limited circumstances. Such searches are necessary to: deter the presence and possession of prohibited substances and items; deter drug and alcohol abuse among the student population; to educate students as to the serious physical, mental and emotional harm caused by drug and alcohol abuse; to prevent injury, illness and harm as result of drug, alcohol abuse and/or weapons; to help identify student drug use and assist parents in pursuing evaluation and appropriate counseling; and to maintain a safe environment free of weapons, alcohol and drug use by vigilant monitoring.

District officials may conduct reasonable searches of school property and equipment, students and their personal effects, and vehicles parked on District property to maintain health, safety, and security in the schools. The types of property that may be searched by school officials include but are not limited to lockers, desks, purses, backpacks, cellular phones or other electronic communication devices, or vehicles parked on District property.

### **Students and their Personal Effects**

School officials may search a student, the student's personal effects (e.g., purses, backpacks, coats, etc.), and/or District property under the direct control of the student when there is reasonable suspicion that the search will produce evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or the District's policies or rules. Reasonable suspicion shall be based on the specific and objective facts that the search will produce evidence related to the alleged violation. The parent of the student shall be notified of the search as soon as possible.

### **School Property**

School property, including, but not limited to, desks and lockers, is owned and controlled by the District and may be searched by school authorities at any time it is not under the immediate, direct control of the student, regardless of whether there is reasonable suspicion. School authorities are authorized to conduct area-wide, general administrative inspections of school property without notice to or consent of the student and without reasonable suspicion. The District may employ contractors to handle trained dogs to assist in these searches.

### **Seizure of Property**

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

Evidence produced by a search may be used in a disciplinary proceeding against the student.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The District encourages parental and student support in its efforts to address and prevent sexual harassment in the public schools. Students and/or parents are encouraged to discuss their questions or concerns about the expectations in this area with the District's Title IX coordinator.

Sexual harassment is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- Quid pro quo: An employee of the recipient conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct
- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity; or
- "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

A determination of responsibility resulting from a formal complaint against a student for engaging in sexual harassment will result in appropriate disciplinary action, according to the nature of the offense.

Complaints may be submitted via the District's Title IX Grievance Procedure. Please refer to Policies 3225 for additional information regarding the District's prohibition against discrimination and harassment.

## **STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE**

Students in foster care are entitled to educational stability under Title I for the duration of their time in foster care. "Foster care" means "24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility." This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive home.

The District will take efforts to ensure that a child in foster care:

- Remains in his or her school of origin (school last enrolled in at the time of placement in foster care) unless it is not in the child's best interest; or
- If the school of origin is not in the child's best interest, the child must be immediately enrolled in a new school regardless of being able to produce records otherwise required.

The District will collaborate with the child welfare agency involved in a particular student's case to make the "best interest" determination as quickly as possible. The District will also collaborate with the child welfare agency regarding the provision of transportation to the selected school for the student.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

### **Access by Parents and Student**

A student's school records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The District maintains two sets of records: a permanent record and a cumulative record. By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records, if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

The building principal will be responsible for maintenance, retention, or destruction of a student's permanent or cumulative records, in accordance with District procedure established by the Superintendent. The principal will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records. Access to records will be granted within 45 days of receipt of a written request. If circumstances prevent a parent or eligible student from inspecting the records, the District will either provide a copy of the requested records or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review the requested records.

Parents of a minor, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are persons who may regularly access a student's records. "School officials with legitimate educational interests" include any employees, agents, or Trustees of the District; cooperatives of which the District is a member; or facilities with which the District contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are working with a student or otherwise performing functions the school would perform in accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

The parent's or student's right of access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher, records pertaining to former students of the District, and records maintained by school law enforcement officials for purposes other than school discipline do not have to be made available to the parents or student. Access will also not be granted to the parent or the student to confidential letters and recommendations concerning admission to a post-secondary educational institution, applications for employment, or receipt of an honor or award, if the student has waived his or her right of access after being advised of his or her right to obtain the names of all persons making such confidential letters or statements.

See Policy 3600 for more information.

### **Access by Other Individuals and Entities**

Certain officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records without prior consent by the parents or student (over 18 years of age). Disclosure to these governmental agencies may be done under some of the following circumstances:

- The District may grant access to or release information from student records to employees or officials of the District or the Montana State Board of Education, provided a current, legitimate educational interest is shown.
- The District may grant access to or release information from student records without parental consent or notification to any person, for the purpose of research, statistical reporting, or planning, provided that no student or parent can be identified from the information released, and the person to whom the information is released signs an affidavit agreeing to comply with all applicable statutes and rules pertaining to school student records.
- The District will grant access to or release information from any student record as specifically required by federal or state statute.
- The District may release student records or information in connection with an emergency, without parental consent, if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons. The Superintendent or Principal will make this decision, taking into consideration the nature of the emergency, the seriousness of the threat to the health and safety of the student or other persons, the need for such records to meet the emergency, and whether the persons to whom such records are released are in a position to deal with the emergency.
- The District may disclose student records or information to the youth court and law enforcement authorities, pertaining to violations of the Montana Youth Court Act or criminal laws by the student.
- The District will comply with an *ex parte* order requiring it to permit the U.S. Attorney General or designee to have access to a student's school records without notice to or consent of the student's parent.
- The District may disclose student records in a court proceeding where the parent is a party to an action involving child abuse or neglect or dependency matters without parental consent or notification if ordered to make this disclosure.
- The District may disclose student records to caseworkers or other Child Protective Services representatives when DPHHS/CPS is legally responsible for the care and protection of the student without notification or consent of the parent.

The District forwards a student's records on request and without prior parental consent to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. Records are also released in accordance with court order or lawfully issued subpoena. Unless the subpoena is issued for law enforcement purposes and the subpoena orders that its contents, existence, or the information sought not be disclosed, the District will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or eligible student in advance of compliance.

Parental consent is required to release the records in most circumstances. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

The District charges a nominal fee for copying records; however, no parent or student will be precluded from copying information because of financial hardship. An access log will also be maintained for each record which details those individuals accessing the records and their legitimate interest in the records.

### **Maintenance of Records**

Permanent records are maintained in perpetuity for every student who has enrolled in the District. Cumulative records will be maintained for eight (8) years after the student graduates or permanently leaves the District. Cumulative records which may be of continued assistance to a student with disabilities, who graduates or permanently withdraws from the District, may, after five (5) years, be transferred to the parents or to the student if the student has succeeded to the rights of the parents.

### **Privacy Matters – Photographs and Social Media**

Because of the advent of cell phones and social media, it has become almost impossible to fully protect the privacy rights of any individual from having his or her picture taken and shared with others. Parents have the right to annually opt out of the District sharing their child's photograph in publications or through District media events. The District will honor any parent opt-outs and not share this information. However, the District cannot prevent others who are present from sharing photos and videos from school events open to parents and/or the public, including music performances, sporting events, open assemblies, or field trips.

## **SUMMER SCHOOL**

PMS Summer School is available to students who are currently enrolled in Polson Middle School.

- Students participating in summer school **will be required to attend on-site at PMS**. Summer school is **Monday through Friday**.
- Summer school is a great opportunity for students to recover credit and get back on track.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **School Sponsored**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. A written request (*Permission and Acknowledgement of Risk Form*) that the student be permitted to ride with a non-custodial adult designated by the parent must be submitted 24 hours prior to the scheduled departure time for the event.

### **Buses and Other School Vehicles**



The District makes school bus transportation available to all students residing three (3) or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school. Further information may be obtained by calling (406)883-6351.

Students are expected to assist District staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding school buses, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus in an orderly manner at the designated bus stop nearest home.
- Keep feet, books, band instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus and before crossing in front of the bus.

When students ride in a District van or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened at all times.

Misconduct will be punished and bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

#### **VIDEOTAPING OF STUDENTS**

The District has the right to use video cameras on District property to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors to District property, and to safeguard District facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent. Students in violation of Board policies, administrative regulations, building rules, or law shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Others may be referred to law enforcement agencies.

Video recordings may become a part of a student's educational record. The District shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws related to record maintenance and retention. Signs will be posted at various locations to inform students, staff, and members of the public that video surveillance cameras are in use.

#### **VISITORS**

The District has the discretion to permit visitors. For the safety of those within the school, all visitors must first report to the main office. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. All visitors must display a visitors pass.

**COPYRIGHT**

Students must follow all federal and state laws governing telecommunication technologies. This includes U.S. Copyright Law as contained in Title 17 of U.S. Code, and School District 23 Board policy and procedure relating to copyright. Copyrighted material is anything written by someone else. Violations of this policy or procedure will result in disciplinary measures that may include, but are not limited to, detention or suspension. This includes the illegal copying of music from the Internet.

**E-MAIL/CHATTING**

Students are permitted to use e-mail for appropriate PMS educational research. Such use must not put the user's personal safety at risk. Personal email access may also be given to students on a case-by-case basis (e.g., foreign exchange students keeping in contact with home). Students are prohibited from joining chat rooms, unless it is a teacher-sponsored activity. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary measures that may include, but are not limited to, detention or suspension.

**HACKING**

Users shall not infiltrate or "hack" outside computing systems or networks (e.g., the release of viruses, worms, or other programs that damage or otherwise harm an outside computing system or network). Users shall not disrupt a system or interfere with another's ability to use that system. Violations of this policy or procedure will result in disciplinary measures that may include, but are not limited to, detention, suspension, or removal from class with a semester grade penalty of "F".

**INAPPROPRIATE SITES**

The use of the District network and the Internet is for educational purposes only. All sites containing pornography or sexually explicit materials (written or pictured) are off limits to users. Violations of this policy or procedure will result in disciplinary measures that may include, but are not limited to, detention or suspension.

**INAPPROPRIATE USE**

Users shall not use the District computer network to purchase goods, solicit sales, conduct business, advertise or sell a service, or transmit obscene, abusive, sexually explicit, inappropriate, or threatening language. Violations of this policy or procedure will result in disciplinary measures that may include, but are not limited to, detention, suspension, or removal from class with a semester grade penalty of "F".

**INSTRUCTION IN THE USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Students accessing the Internet from PMS will be instructed on the policies governing such use during their English Language Arts courses at the beginning of the first semester. New students should be sure to review these policies in this section of the Handbook and ask questions if they need clarification.

**INTERNET ACCESS**

The purpose of District-provided Internet access is to facilitate communications in support of research and education. Access is a privilege, not a right. Students utilizing Internet access are responsible for good behavior on-line, just as they are in a classroom or other area of the school. To remain eligible as users, students' use must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of the school. The same general rules for behavior and communications apply. The District provides filtering software for all computers accessing the Internet.

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

When sending electronic messages, students should not include information that could identify themselves to non-school personnel. Users' network passwords are provided for their personal use. Users should not share their password or log into the network with another user's login name and password. If a user suspects someone has discovered their password, they should change it or have it changed immediately. Users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users.

**PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY**

Users should have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computer files sent and received on the school computer network or stored in his/her directory. The school computer network's system operator, or other school employees, may at any time review the subject, content, and appropriateness of electronic communications, proxy servers or other computer files and remove them if warranted. Any violation of District rules will be reported to school administrators for possible disciplinary action.

### TECHNOLOGY USE VIOLATIONS

Technology use violations will result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, the loss of access to these technologies, referral to a school administrator, suspension, legal prosecution; and/or remuneration.

### TELECOMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Telecommunication technologies are to be utilized at PMS to realize curricular objectives through communication with others and through the acquisition of information. Students should use these technologies only in a:

- considerate, ethical, and lawful manner
- manner consistent with curricular objectives
- manner consistent with the required etiquette of each site
- manner which ensures the safety of the use and others
- manner which respects the privacy of accounts
- manner which respects the rights of others to access these technologies

### UNLAWFUL ONLINE ACTIVITY

Students must follow all federal and state laws governing telecommunication technologies.

### USE OF TECHNOLOGY

It is the responsibility of each student to use telecommunication technologies at PMS in a manner that appropriately reflects the educational goals and objectives of School District 23 and the educational mission of PMS. Access to PMS technology is a privilege and not a right. Please review Polson Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy included in this Handbook for policy details.

Telecommunications technologies include, but are not limited to:

computer software, such as browser software, e-mail software, etc.

equipment, such as televisions, telephones, video cameras, computer hardware, etc.

networks, such as the Internet, LAN's (Local Area Networks), DAN's (District Area Networks), and WAN's (Wide Area Networks), etc.

### WEB PUBLISHING GUIDELINES

Please review School District 23 Board Policy 3612 for the complete guidelines. The following guidelines are intended to summarize some of the key elements of the policy. Content published on the District network and web server must comply with the following guidelines:

- Publications should be designed for clarity and readability and strive for high quality in both style and presentation. Correct grammar and spelling are mandatory.
- Publications must include a statement of copyright when necessary and appropriate, and must indicate permission has been secured when including copyrighted materials.
- Publications may not contain business advertising nor may they be used for commercial purposes for the pursuit of personal or financial gain.
- Student names accompanying pictures may only include first name and last initial. Publication of any pictures of students with accompanying names must be pre-authorized by explicit parental permission using the District approved permission form.

## Polson School District Acceptable Use Policy (3612P)

## District-Provided Access to Electronic Information, Services, Equipment, and Networks

All use of equipment and electronic networks shall be consistent with the District's goal of promoting educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. These procedures do not attempt to state all required or proscribed behaviors by users. However, some specific examples are provided. The failure of any user to follow these procedures will result in the loss of privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Acceptable Use – Access to the District's equipment and electronic networks must be: (a) for the purpose of education or research and consistent with the educational objectives of the District; or (b) for legitimate business use.
- Privileges – The use of the District's equipment and electronic networks is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of those privileges. The system administrator (and/or principal) will make all decisions regarding whether or not a user has violated these procedures and may deny, revoke, or suspend access at any time. That decision is final.
- Unacceptable Use – The user is responsible for his or her actions and activities involving the equipment and network. Some examples of unacceptable uses are:
  - Using the equipment and network for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contracts, or transmitting any material in violation of any federal or state law;
  - Unauthorized downloading of software, regardless of whether it is copyrighted or devirused;
  - Downloading copyrighted material for other than personal use;
  - Using the equipment or network for private financial or commercial gain;
  - Wastefully using resources, such as file space;
  - Hacking or gaining unauthorized access to files, resources, or entities;
  - Invading the privacy of individuals, which includes the unauthorized disclosure, dissemination, and use of information of a personal nature about anyone;
  - Using another user's account or password;
  - Posting material authored or created by another, without his/her consent;
  - Posting anonymous messages;
  - Using the equipment or network for commercial or private advertising;
  - Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, harassing, or illegal material; and
  - Using the equipment or network while access privileges are suspended or revoked.
- Network Etiquette – The user is expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include but are not limited to the following:
  - Be polite. Do not become abusive in messages to others.
  - Use appropriate language. Do not swear or use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language.
  - Do not reveal personal information, including the addresses or telephone numbers, of students or colleagues.
  - Recognize that electronic mail (e-mail) is not private. People who operate the system have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
  - Do not use the network in any way that would disrupt its use by other users.
  - Consider all communications and information accessible via the network to be private property.
- No Warranties – The District makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The District will not be responsible for any damages the user suffers. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, missed deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its negligence or the user's errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. The District specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

- Indemnification – The user agrees to indemnify the District for any losses, costs, or damages, including reasonable attorney fees, incurred by the District, relating to or arising out of any violation of these procedures.
- Security – Network security is a high priority. If the user can identify a security problem on the Internet, the user must notify the system administrator or building principal. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Keep your account and password confidential. Do not use another individual's account without written permission from that individual. Attempts to log on to the Internet as a system administrator will result in cancellation of user privileges. Any user identified as a security risk may be denied access to the network.
- Vandalism – Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges, and other disciplinary action. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy equipment, data of another user, the Internet, or any other network. This includes but is not limited to uploading or creation of computer viruses.
- Telephone Charges – The District assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges or fees, including telephone charges, long-distance charges, per-minute surcharges, and/ or equipment or line costs.
- Copyright Web Publishing Rules – Students shall comply with District Policy 2312 and staff guidance when utilizing material subject to copyright.

#### **INTERNET SAFETY**

- Internet access is limited to only those “acceptable uses,” as detailed in these procedures. Internet safety is almost assured if users will not engage in “unacceptable uses,” as detailed in these procedures, and will otherwise follow these procedures.
- Staff members shall supervise students while students are using District Internet access, to ensure that the students abide by the Terms and Conditions for Internet access, as contained in these procedures.
- Each District computer with Internet access has a filtering device that blocks entry to visual depictions that are: (1) obscene; (2) pornographic; or (3) harmful or inappropriate for students, as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act and determined by the Superintendent or designee.
- The district shall provide age-appropriate instruction to students regarding appropriate online behavior. Such instruction shall include, but not be limited to: positive interactions with others online, including on social networking sites and in chat rooms; proper online social etiquette; protection from online predators and personal safety; and how to recognize and respond to cyberbullying and other threats.
- The system administrator and principal shall monitor student Internet access.

### **COUNSELING - PERSONAL**

School counselors are available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. Counselors may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. Students who wish to meet with a counselor may schedule an appointment in the PMS Counseling Office.

**Please note:** The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent, unless required by state or federal law for special education purposes.

### **RESTORATIVE PRACTICES**

Restorative practices can be used to resolve disputes. In addition to resolving conflicts between parents, students, and staff, we also offer peer restorative practices. It is a voluntary and confidential process where two disputants sit face to face and talk with the help of a neutral third party (mediator). After the problem is defined, solutions are created and then evaluated. When an agreement is reached, it is written and signed by both disputants. Please see a school counselor to arrange a mediation session.

### **SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT**

Systems of support is a tiered intervention system for those students that may need extra support with academics, attendance, or behavior. This is a positive support plan that helps to monitor and intervene with those students that are struggling with one or more areas within the school system. It is our intention to identify, support, and monitor students to help them maintain social, emotional, and academic well being.

### **SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER**

The School Resource Officer helps to improve the overall safety of our school. The officer assists the administration in criminal investigations and offers required support to students, offenders, victims, and their family members. The officer is under the direction of the Lake County Sheriff's Department.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION/504**

The District provides free appropriate public education and necessary related services to all children with disabilities residing within the District, as required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), provisions of Montana law, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The District ensures that students who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are provided with appropriate educational services. Parents should contact the Counseling Center for additional information on special education services.

## Polson Middle School

### Title I Parent Involvement Policy

In an effort to foster student success, partnerships between the school and parents are vital. At Polson Middle School we believe parent/guardian support is crucial in our efforts to provide quality education, to maximize the success of our students and to help them achieve higher academic standards to succeed in school and life.

The purpose of this policy is to inform and educate parents about the Title I program and the responsibilities of the school in regards to parent involvement. It was developed in conjunction with parents, teachers, and administrators of Polson Middle School.

The Polson Middle School Title I program will:

- Involve parents in the development of this policy and the school/parent/student compact.
- Inform parents annually about the Title I program and the rights of parents and review these components each year.
- Design parent involvement programs and meetings that are aimed toward increasing parent involvement in student education and learning.
- Offer a number of meetings throughout the school year that are scheduled at reasonable and flexible times to encourage maximum participation.
- Provide timely information about school programs, curriculum and instruction, assessments, and measures of progress.
- Involve parents in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs.
- Provide opportunities for parents to offer suggestions and participate in discussions related to the Title I programs and receive timely responses. If dissatisfied with the school's Title I program, parent comments will be taken to the District level.
- Utilize parent involvement funding in a responsible manner based on the needs.
- Inform parents of school activities through multiple methods of communication. Activities that allow for additional opportunities for parent involvement may include, but aren't limited to:
  - Parent / Teacher Conferences
  - Monthly Newsletters
  - Parent/School Compact
  - District Website
  - Parent Council

## TITLE I : School-Parent-Student Compact

Federal guidelines require that all schools receiving Title I funds develop a School-Parent-Student compact. A compact is an agreement among participants working together for a common goal. Teachers, students, and parents all have the responsibility to contribute to the effort to establish an effective climate for learning for all students. This compact outlines the role of each group in an effort to provide a high-quality education for our students.

As a student I will:

- Attend school regularly and arrive to all classes on time
- Complete homework assignments on time and to the best of my ability
- Always do my best to produce quality work
- Participate in school-related activities
- Set aside time at home to read each day
- Show respect for fellow students, teachers, and school property
- Follow classroom, school, and bus rules

As a parent, I will:

- Ensure that my child attends school regularly and arrives on time
- Ensure that my child completes his/her homework on time
- Provide a place in the home where my child can read, study, and complete assignments
- Discuss my child's progress with his/her teacher on a regular basis
- Support the school and encourage my child to be respectful of teachers and fellow students
- Encourage my child to read at home daily
- Volunteer at school whenever possible

As teachers, we will:

- Help each child meet his/her fullest potential in a safe learning environment
- Make efficient use of learning time by coming prepared to teach with meaningful activities
- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive environment where learning is encouraged and celebrated
- Adapt instruction to meet the individual needs of all learners
- Encourage students to read for enjoyment, as well as for information
- Supply students and parents with clear and frequent evaluations of progress and achievement
- Promote an environment where parents feel welcome in our school and are encouraged to volunteer and participate in classroom activities
- Encourage parents to contact teachers to discuss their child's progress academically and socially
- Hold parent-teacher conferences to discuss individual student achievement and share ways to support learning at home



## Polson Middle School

### Harassment Reporting Form for Students

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's name:

*(If you feel uncomfortable leaving your name, you may submit an anonymous report, but please understand that an anonymous report will be much more difficult to investigate. We assure you that we'll use our best efforts to keep your report confidential.)*

1. Who was responsible for the harassment or incident(s)?

2. Describe the incident(s).

3. Date(s), time(s), and place(s) the incident(s) occurred.

4. Were other individuals involved in the incident(s)? \_ yes \_ no. If so, name the individual(s) and explain their roles.

5. Did anyone witness the incident(s)? \_ yes \_ no. If so, name the witnesses.

6. Did you take any action in response to the incident? \_ yes \_ no. If yes, what action did you take?

7. Were there any prior incidents? \_ yes \_ no? If so, describe any prior incidents.

Signature of Student Complainant \_\_\_\_\_

**Polson Middle School**

**Handbook Acknowledgement/Acceptable Use Policy/Media Consent/Off Campus**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

I have read the Polson School District Acceptable Use Policy (3612P).

I agree to follow the rules contained in this policy. I understand that if I violate the rules, my account can be terminated and I may face other disciplinary measures.

I have read the *Student and Parent Handbook* and understand the procedures and rules therein.

I have read the *Title 1 Compact* and understand the procedures therein.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent or Guardian Section**

I have read the Polson School District Acceptable Use Policy (3612P).

I hereby release the school district, its personnel, and any institutions with which it is affiliated, from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my child's use of, or inability to use, the Polson Public Schools Information Network System, including, but not limited to claims that may arise from unauthorized use of the network to purchase products or services.

I will instruct my child regarding any restrictions against accessing material that are in addition to the restrictions set forth in the Electronic Information, Services, and Networks Agreement. I will emphasize to my child the importance of following the rules for personal safety.

I give permission to issue an account for my child and certify that the information contained in this form is correct.

I give permission for my child to participate in any school activity that is not on school property, and that is chaperoned by a classroom teacher. This could include field trips, lunches, end of year activities, and permission for my student's work or photo to be published on our school's web page or other publications.

I have read the *Student and Parent Handbook* and understand the procedures and rules therein.

Parent/Guardian (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_