

MULBERRY CREEK ELEMENTARY



2022-2023

STUDENT

HANDBOOK

Harris County School System

Mission Statement

Ensuring an excellent education for every child in Harris County

Vision

One community committed to the well-being and preparation of every student for life-long success in a global society

Beliefs

Safety is a priority.

Education is a shared responsibility.

Inclusive environments develop the whole child.

Compassionate and nurturing relationships are vital to success.

Workforce development empowers individual success in a global society.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Georgia Law requires that all children attending schools in the state of Georgia have a current Certificate of Immunization on file in the school office. This form #3231 is available at the Harris County Health Department and at many of the doctor's offices. Students who do not have a current immunization form will not be allowed to enter school until a certificate is obtained. Students entering from out of state will have 30 days to present the certificate. Students attending a Georgia public school for the first time must have an Eye, Ear, and Dental Certificate form #3300 on file in the school office. This form is available from the Harris County Health Department and from the child's physician. Georgia residents must present this form upon entrance. Out of state residents will have 30 days to present the certificate.

AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Mulberry Creek Elementary offers an After School Enrichment Program (ASEP) from 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. This program offers parents a child care option for the afternoon. The program employs a certified teacher to direct and plan activities. Children are provided a snack, outside activity time, enrichment activities, and homework time. At the time of this printing the most current information is as follows:

A non-refundable **registration fee of \$10.00 per family** is required for all participants. Employees must also pay this fee for their children who are enrolled in the program.

Weekly fee for one (1) child \$40.00 per week if the child will stay in the program three (3) or more days per week.

Weekly fee for two (2) children \$60.00 per week if children will stay in the program three (3) or more days per week.

Weekly fee for three (3) children \$85.00 per week if children will stay in the program three (3) or more days per week.

Drop-in fee \$25.00 per day *per child*.

Tuition checks are to be made payable to MCE A.S.E.P. An \$8.00 bank fee will be charged on all returned checks. A \$25.00 fee will be charged for a second returned check. Two returned checks will necessitate a "**cash only**" relationship. Financial assistance is available to those who qualify. Please call the Department of Family and Children Services at 706-628-4226 for further information.

All fees are subject to increase at the beginning of each school year based on Board of Education approval. Any students who have outstanding debts from the previous year will not be allowed to enroll in the program. More information is available through the school office.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mulberry Creek Elementary, Harris County Schools, and the state of Georgia, place high importance on school attendance. **It is very important that students attend school each day. Most importantly, each day that a student is absent from school is a day of missed learning. Additionally, The Mulberry Creek and Harris County Schools Georgia College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) ratings from the state of Georgia Department of Education are negatively affected by students who are absent more than six days of school during a school year.** Because absences negatively affect student learning, disrupt teachers' ability to teach, and negatively affect the school CCRPI rating, the faculty and administration of MCE do not condone absences except for those reasons defined by Harris County Board of Education policy. Family vacations and/or trips etc. are not acceptable excused absences from school. If a student has an extended illness, the parent should contact the school counselor, and the necessary assistance will be given to help the child make up missed work. Teachers are allowed 24 hours for assignment preparation. The work must be completed and turned in within 5 days of return to school. Absences from school are classified as unexcused or excused. An absence will be excused for:

1. Personal illness
2. Serious illness or death in the family
3. Religious holidays
4. Court ordered appearances
5. Hazardous weather conditions

When a student is absent from school, a note must be sent the day the student returns stating the reason for the absence. For excused absences, the student will be given one day for each day absent to make up the work. For unexcused absences, the student will have one day to make up the work. According to Harris County Board of Education policy JBDA, students in grades K-5 may be retained in the student's present grade if the student is absent for 16 or more days of the school year. Mulberry Creek Elementary attendance procedures are as follows:

1. After 3 unexcused absences, the counselor will send a letter to the parents.
2. After 5 unexcused absences, parents will be contacted to attend a conference with the school Attendance Intervention Committee.
3. After 10 unexcused absences, parents will be required to attend an Attendance Appeals Committee which will include the district social worker and possibly a juvenile justice officer.

A copy of the appeals process will be attached to the notice. In order for a student to be counted present, if he/she arrives late or leaves early, the student must be present for one-half of the instructional day. Students arriving to school after 11:30 a.m. will be considered absent.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES AT SCHOOL

The teachers at all grade levels have processes in place to recognize student birthdays. We know birthdays are very important to students. Each grade level will notify parents at the beginning of the year about how student birthdays are celebrated at each grade. Parents should not send birthday items (cakes, cupcakes, snacks, etc.) without first contacting the teacher in advance. Unannounced birthday parties can be disruptive to the instructional day. To ensure student safety we must consider student food allergies and ensure proper food handling and preparation procedures when providing any food items or snacks to students. Therefore, we respectfully ask that only commercially packaged and prepared foods/snacks be provided for classroom parties. Ingredients should be listed on all products.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH

Hot, nutritious lunches are served in the cafeteria each school day. A student may pay for lunch daily, but he/she is encouraged to pay for lunch and breakfast by the week or the month. A student must bring the lunch/breakfast money in a sealed envelope with his/her first and last name and the teacher's name on the front. Do not include snack money in this envelope. Free and reduced price lunches are available for students who qualify for the program. Each student will receive a lunch application on the first day of school. If you wish to apply, complete the form and return it to school. If you do not wish to apply for free or reduced price lunch, check "No" sign and return the form to school. You may apply for free or reduced price lunch at any time during the school year should income or family conditions change. Students who bring a lunch from home may buy milk in the cafeteria. **Carbonated soft drinks, such as Coca-Cola, Sprite, Mountain Dew, etc. are not allowed at school as part of student lunches.**

The breakfast program begins at 7:35a.m. and ends at 8:00a.m. Any student who wishes to participate should report to the cafeteria BEFORE 7:50A.M.

BUSES

Students living 1½ miles or more from the school are provided free and reliable bus transportation to and from school in their attendance district. **PARENTS MUST SEND WRITTEN NOTICE WHEN A CHILD WILL USE DIFFERENT TRANSPORTATION HOME AT THE END OF THE DAY OR IF A CHILD IS SUPPOSED TO GO TO A DIFFERENT DESTINATION AT THE END OF THE DAY. THE STUDENT WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO CHANGE BUSES OR STAY AFTER SCHOOL WITH OUT A WRITTEN NOTE.** The parent is responsible for supervision at the bus stop and for transportation if the student misses the bus. Riding a school bus is a privilege and students are expected to follow all rules of conduct which are given to them on the first day of school. The following discipline procedures will be followed in the event that a student chooses not to follow the bus rules:

Bus drivers shall warn students who misbehave and change seating assignments in an effort to control misbehavior before referring the student to the principal.

- First** - Written discipline referral to principal - Warning by principal or designee and copy of referral sent home to parent.
- Second** - Written discipline referral to principal - Conference with the Principal or designee. (Bus Driver will attend at discretion of principal). Documentation of the conference is made. Parent will be called.
- Third** - Written discipline referral to principal or designee- Three (3) day suspension off bus, copy of referral sent to parent.
- Fourth** - Written discipline referral to principal - Five (5) day suspension off bus,

copy of referral sent to parent.

Fifth - Written discipline referral to principal - Ten (10) day suspension off bus a referral sent to superintendent for expulsion from riding the bus. Referral sent to parent. Parent conference must be held at the school with the principal.

Sixth - Written discipline referral to principal - Ten (10) day suspension off bus and referral sent to superintendent for permanent expulsion from riding the bus. Referral mailed to parent. Hearing must be held before this takes place.

Fighting and other serious offenses - Automatic suspension from bus and from school. Parents will be immediately notified. The following items are not allowed on Harris County school buses: food, drinks, animals, flowers, candy, balloons, baseball/softball bats, glitter, tobacco, weapons, knives, guns, explosives, flammable materials, dangerous chemicals, alcohol or other drugs, use of perfume, hair spray, nail polish, radios/headphones, electronic games, and items for sale. In short, any item which causes harm to students or disruption on the bus is restricted.

CELL PHONE USE

Students may not use cell phones/smart watches at school during the instructional day. If a student needs to contact a parent, the teacher will send the student to the office. If a parent needs to contact a student they should call the school office.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBERS

If there is a change of address or phone number during the school year, please contact the main office in order for all emergency information and necessary files to be kept up to date.

CLASS PARTIES

Class parties provide students with a time to learn appropriate social behavior and parties ARE fun! Grade parents may sponsor class parties for Fall Celebration, Winter Holiday, and Valentine's Day. The parties will begin no earlier than 1:45 p.m. Parents should not report to the classroom before 1:30 p.m.

Classroom parties during the holiday season are fun for students and a memorable part of elementary school. To ensure student safety we must consider student food allergies and ensure proper food handling and preparation procedures when providing any food items or snacks to students. Therefore, we respectfully ask that only commercially packaged and prepared foods/snacks be provided for classroom parties. Ingredients should be listed on all products.

DRESS CODE

Students are expected to be well-groomed when coming to school. Any form of dress that causes a distraction in the school is not allowed. Distracting hairstyles and hair color are not permitted, as these too can cause disruption to the school day. Students may not wear the following items:

- ✓ Revealing clothing, including halters or mesh tops
- ✓ Cleated shoes
- ✓ Any type of shoe with roller skate wheels

- ✓ Any type of pants or shorts hanging down to expose undergarments
- ✓ Clothing that exposes the stomach, sides, or backs to include holes in pants
- ✓ Tank tops or shirts with spaghetti straps
- ✓ Facial or body glitter
- ✓ Sunglasses (only allowed for special assemblies, such as Red Ribbon Week)
- ✓ Hats or nylon stocking-type caps
- ✓ Short shorts, skirts and/or dresses that are more than 3 inches above the knee
- ✓ Tight or revealing clothing
- ✓ Any clothing that encourages or advertises alcohol, tobacco, violence, drugs, racial tension, nudity or obscene / vulgar language

Appropriate school shoes (sneaker-type shoes) are highly encouraged for all students, as they are safer for the playground, physical education, and movement in hallways and classrooms. **All shoes must have a back or strap across the back.** Slip-on type shoes, backless shoes, high heels (more than 1 inch), and flip-flops **are not permitted.** When a student is not dressed appropriately (according to the judgment of the staff), the parents may be contacted to bring the student a change of clothes or the child may be given a change of clothes from the Clothes Closet, located in the clinic. Students who are inappropriately dressed will not be allowed in class.

EARLY STUDENT DISMISSAL

We recommend that students not be checked out after 1:45 p.m. Early checkout of students between 1:45 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. presents disruptions to the learning environment in the classroom. If a student becomes ill at school, the teacher will allow the student to report to the clinic. The school nurse will call home. Upon arrival to the school for checkout, parents must come into the office and complete the sign-out sheet before a student will be dismissed. If it is necessary for a child to leave school before the end of the day (i.e., doctor's appointment), his/her parent must report to the front office to sign the student out and the secretary will call the student to the office. **Students will not be called to the office until parents arrive.** If someone else is to pick up your child, send a note with your child the day he/she is going to be picked up and in the note state the name of the person who will be picking up your child. Anyone checking out a student must be listed on the registration form by the parent or guardian. **Everyone checking out a student will be asked to present identification.** Please notify the teacher and the principal if a child is not to be released to a certain individual.

FIELD TRIPS

If field trips are planned, they are planned to help make instruction more effective. Transportation will be provided by the Harris County School System. Students who are behavior problems at school will not be allowed to go on field trips unless accompanied by a parent. Only children who are enrolled at Mulberry Creek and who are involved in the instructional activity will be eligible for transportation by bus. **Parents must have a current background check on file to serve as a chaperone. Parents who are asked to chaperone field trips are there to help supervise the children and should not bring pre-school children. (Exception: Younger siblings of children in the Pre-K program may go on field trips with the Pre-K class.)** *As a chaperone, it is expected that you will assist in supervising the students at all times while on the field trip.* **This will help ensure the safety of all our students.** Parents will be expected to follow the same regulations as school personnel during these trips and set good examples for the

students. These regulations include **APPROPRIATE DRESS, NO TOBACCO USE OF ANY KIND, AND NO USE OF PROFANITY.** Chaperones will be selected by the teacher and will be determined by the number of students participating and the space available. **Written permission is required by parents in order for a child to attend any field trip.** Toys, MP-3/CD players, cell phones, electronic games and/or any other items that might cause a disruption on the bus will not be allowed. The lunchroom will provide sack lunches for students who wish to purchase a lunch on the day of a field trip.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Mulberry Creek employs a full-time physical education teacher who will teach each classroom each week. Students will be excused from physical education with a written excuse from a doctor. If necessary on a few occasions a parent may request that a child not participate in physical education for one day because of a recent illness.

As a part of your child's P.E. program, Mulberry Creek Elementary takes part in the FITNESSGRAM physical fitness assessment. All students in grades 1-5 participate in this assessment. FITNESSGRAM was selected by the Georgia Department of Education because it measures only those areas of fitness related to the health of students. The areas of health related fitness include: cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and body composition. **The FITNESSGRAM assessment does not compare your child to anyone else, nor does it measure skill or athletic performance.** Rather, it compares your child to health standards that have been established by researchers as the level of fitness all students should reach in order to attain health benefits.

Please plan on using the student report as a tool to come up with ways to support your child in leading a healthy and active lifestyle. A few ways to support your elementary child include:

- Stress the importance fitness has on feeling good!
- Give your child equipment that encourages physical activity.
- Help your child identify a time and place for daily physical activity.
- Spend less time watching T.V. and playing video games.
- Be a role model for your child.
- Teach your child games you enjoyed playing as a child.
- Praise and encourage your child to be active.
- Involve your child in after school or recreation programs within your community.

We are very excited about participating in FITNESSGRAM and hope you will support and help your child reach his/her potential. If you have any questions, please contact your child's physical education teacher.

GRADING

All Harris County Schools use the following grading scale for Grades 1-5:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

F = Below 70

*Kindergarten and pre-k have standards based assessments/and report cards that will be explained on the first report card.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The school counselor is available to help meet the needs of all students. The counselor is scheduled into every classroom at least once a month to provide guidance lessons such as test-taking/study skills, peer relationships, character/career education, and other relevant activities from which all students benefit. The counselor also conducts small group sessions for children coping with similar issues such as divorce, relocation, anger management or death. Parental permission must be obtained before a student can participate in small group counseling. Students may ask to see the counselor or they may be referred by their teacher, parent or administrator. Possible reasons for referral may include tardiness, absenteeism, school adjustment, grades, behavior, peer relations, or family/health issues. The counselor also has resources available that address common parental concerns such as homework, discipline, child development, learning disabilities, and ADHD. You may contact the counselor at any time to discuss an issue affecting your child or to refer your child for individual or group counseling.

HEALTH RECORDS

All health records of the student, including immunization records, will be kept in the student's permanent folder in the main office. Law requires the immunization certificate issued by the Georgia Department of Human Resources for all students.

Medication Information: If a student must receive medicine at school, certain procedures will be followed. *Before any medication can be administered, the proper form must be completed.* These forms are located in the school nurse's office.

Oral Medication in Schools: If exceptional circumstances exist wherein a child is required to take prescription medication during school hours and the parent cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the principal or his designee (school nurse) may administer medication in compliance with the following regulations:

1. Written instructions signed by the parent shall always be required and shall include:
2. Student's name
3. Name of Medication
4. Time medication is to be administered
5. Required dosage
6. List of possible side effects
7. Termination date for administering the medication, and other information which may be requested of the parent by the principal or the principal's designee.

The principal or his/her designee shall:

1. Inform appropriate school personnel to the use of medication
2. Keep a written record of the administering of medication
3. Keep the medication in a locked cabinet or drawer at all times when not being administered; and return any unused medication directly to the parent.

The parent(s) of the student must assume responsibility for informing the principal's designee of any change in the child's health or change in medication.

The school district retains the right and discretion to reject requests for the administering of medication for any good and sufficient cause.

No medication shall be administered at school unless a current Medical Authorization and Release form has been completed and signed by the student's parent or guardian.

The principal or his/her designee shall follow the instructions provided on the Medical Authorization and Release form, a copy of which is (JGCD-E) incorporated by reference to this policy.

A copy of this policy will be provided to parent(s) upon their request.

HOMEWORK

Students may be assigned homework Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Wednesday will be Family Night and no homework will be assigned. Homework assignments will be checked or graded on a daily basis. Students may be given zeros for not completing homework assignments.

Estimated homework time for each grade is as follows:

Kindergarten – 10 minutes

Third Grade - 30 minutes

First Grade - 10 minutes

Fourth Grade - 40-45 minutes

Second Grade - 20 minutes

HONORS

Principal Honor Roll - A student who makes all A's in academic areas all year.

Honor Roll - A student who makes A's and B's or all B's in academic areas.

A Special awards program will be held at the end of the year to recognize students who perform well throughout the year. Awards will be given for honor roll, art, music, and other academic areas. Parents will receive an invitation if their child is to be recognized during the awards program.

HOSPITAL HOMEBOUND SERVICES

The Harris County School System offers Hospital Homebound Services for students who are too ill or injured to attend school. A student may qualify for regular or intermittent Hospital Homebound Services. Regular Hospital Homebound is where a student will be absent from school for at least 10 days or more consecutively. Intermittent Homebound is where a student has a chronic illness that may require frequent hospitalizations or will be absent throughout the school year because of a chronic illness. A licensed physician or psychologist must provide medical certification verifying the illness or injury. A student does not accumulate any absences while he or she is on Hospital Homebound status. You may contact your school counselor for an application. If you have questions, you may call the School Social Worker at 706-628-4206, Ext. 1220.

LABELING STUDENT ITEMS

Please label your child's belongings with the student's full name; especially winter coats and lunchboxes. Lunchboxes can be labeled with a permanent marker on the bottom or inside.

OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION

Students cannot be in possession of over the counter medication. ALL medication MUST be administered through the nurse's office. Students in possession of over the counter medications at school will face disciplinary consequences. A signed permission form must be on file in the nurse's office giving permission for the student to take any over the counter medication.

MEDIA DISPLAYS

Schools in the Harris County School System often display **student work and group and individual student pictures** on the school websites, district website, in school newsletters, on social media and in the local newspaper. The student's FULL NAME and grade may be listed along with his/her work. This is to highlight the great activities taking place at MCE and share with our community supporters.

If you **DO NOT** wish for your child's work and/or pictures to be displayed on the websites, newsletters, social media and/or the local newspapers, please submit a written **OPT OUT** note to Mrs. Bethany Brown, our Data Clerk. Send the note with your child to the homeroom teacher, who will forward it to Mrs. Brown.

MILITARY FAMILIES

A student whose parent is in military service and has been called to duty or is on leave from overseas deployment shall be granted excused absences up to a maximum of five school days per year to visit with the parent. These days may be taken prior to deployment or during the parent's leave. This comes under an additional category of excused absences.

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

In compliance with Georgia law, at the beginning of each school day, every teacher shall conduct a brief period of quiet reflection for not more than 60 seconds with the participation of all pupils. This moment of quiet reflection is not intended to be a religious service or exercise but shall be considered as an opportunity for a moment of silent reflection on the anticipated activities of the day. Teachers and administrators shall not suggest nor imply that students should or should not use the moment of reflection for prayer, nor shall they deny any student the right to use it for a moment of quiet prayer. Students and/or staff may not under any circumstances use the moment of quiet reflection to audibly pray, singly or in unison.

Multi-tier System of Supports

(MTSS) is the tiered state student intervention system that functions in conjunction with the school Student Support Team to provide and monitor interventions for students who need assistance with academics and behavior.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences with your child's teacher may be arranged by sending a written request to the teacher stating the date and time desired or by asking the teacher to call to arrange the time. Conferences must be arranged before or after school or during the teacher's planning period. Teachers are not allowed to conference with parents during instructional time. The principal will participate in the conference if the teacher and/or parent request the principal's presence;

however, parents are urged to discuss any concerns with the teacher before involving the school administration. Parent participation is wanted and needed to make the school year successful. We will be happy to work with parents in order to accomplish this goal. At Sneak-A-Peek and Open House, parents will be afforded the opportunity to sign up for a parent/teacher conference. Sneak-A-Peek and Open House are not appropriate times to have parent/teacher conferences for confidentiality and scheduling reasons.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The PTO's mission is to support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community and before governmental agencies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children; to assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children; and to encourage parental and public involvement in the public schools of this nation. Mulberry Creek has a very active Parent-Teacher Organization and encourages you to join. We appreciate and welcome the many volunteers who assist our students and teachers each year. To learn more about how you can make a difference in a child's life through volunteering in PTO, contact the school or a PTO Board Member at mulberrycreekpto@gmail.com.

PARKING

There is Visitor Parking in the front of the school. Violations of parking in Handicapped spaces will be reported to the Sheriff's Department.

Do not block the driveway or circle in front of the school during school hours.

PARTY INVITATIONS

If your child is inviting all the children in the class to a birthday party away from school, the teacher will be glad to assist in the distribution of invitations. **If only a part of the class is invited, please mail the invitations.** This still does not eliminate hurt feelings. The only way to do that is to ask that each parent treat another child the way they would want their own child treated. Elementary children are particularly sensitive to being excluded by someone they think is a friend.

PETS IN THE BUILDING

For the safety and health of our students no pets will be allowed into the building.

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RESPECT FOR PROPERTY

Mulberry Creek is a beautiful building. Vandalism of any kind (writing on walls, furniture, destroying textbooks, etc.) will be dealt with immediately. Be proud of your school and treat it with respect.

SELLING AT SCHOOL

Students are not allowed to sell or trade any items at school. Examples of these are gum, pencils, or tickets to outside events.

SCHOOL DAY

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 2:20 p.m. **No students should arrive before 7:30 a.m., as there will be no supervision.** Breakfast for all students is served from 7:30 a.m. to 7:55 a.m. Breakfast will not be served after 8:00 a.m. except in emergencies involving late buses. Students should report to the cafeteria upon arrival if they intend to eat breakfast. Students may not be served breakfast if they do not arrive in the cafeteria before 7:55 a.m.

Please try to schedule your child's appointments after the school day. When your child is checked out early, he/she misses valuable instructional time, which continues until 2:15 p.m. each day. If students are picked up early, they must be signed out in the front office. Students will be called over the intercom; students cannot be dismissed from classrooms.

SCHOOL HOURS

The school day begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m.

SNACKS

ALL "goodies", snacks, and foods for the class **MUST** be purchased/pre-packaged with ingredients visible on the packaging. This will help to prevent allergic reactions.

Foods of minimal nutritional value will not be served to students before the end of their lunch period. **Ice cream may be purchased for \$1.00.** Please send snack money in a separate envelope labeled with your child's name and amount of money in the envelope. A wellness policy is in place to promote healthy snacks that are used for class parties and events. Healthy food and drink choices are emphasized.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

During the school year, students may participate in state or national standardized testing (e.g., Georgia Milestones). The purpose of these tests is to enable teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their students and to help them design instruction to meet their students' needs. These tests are also used to identify students who may qualify for special instructional programs such as Odyssey or the Early Intervention Program (EIP). Soon after test results are returned to the school, parents will be sent a copy of their child's test scores along with an explanation of how to interpret the results. For spring testing, the results are normally mailed home with the students' final report card. If further explanation is needed, you may contact the teacher or school counselor to discuss the test results.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS

The Harris County Board of Education realizes that there may be conditions in the school that need improvement. Students should have some means to effectively express their concerns, which will be considered and handled with fairness. Student complaints shall be resolved through an orderly process and at the lowest possible level. Listed below are the steps that will be taken in handling student complaints:

- ✓ Any student and his/her parent should discuss a decision or situation that he/she considers unjust with the classroom teacher.
- ✓ If the matter remains unresolved, the student, parent, or teacher may bring the matter to the principal for consideration.
- ✓ If the matter remains unresolved, it may be brought to the Superintendent or designee for consideration.
- ✓ Complaints that remain unresolved following the action of the Superintendent may be referred in writing to the Board of Education. The Board's decision, if it chooses to make one, shall be final.

Parents and students may contact teachers and the principal at Mulberry Creek Elementary, 8504 Ga Highway 315 Cataula, GA 31804. The telephone number is (706) 320-9397. Appeals of decisions made at the school level should be made to the Superintendent of Schools, PO Box 388, Hamilton, GA 31811. The telephone number is (706) 628-4206. More detailed procedures for resolution of complaints may be found in the Harris County Board of Education policy JCE. A copy may be found in the Media Center or Principal's Office. A complaint form is included in the back of this handbook.

STUDENT DROP-OFF

Students who are dropped off in the mornings by their parents should be dropped off in the front of the building. Please pull into the left or right drop off lane when dropping off. If a parent needs to come into the school for any reason, please park in the parking lot. **Do not leave your car parked along the curb! This creates a safety hazard.** Supervision of students begins at 7:30. If your child arrives after 8:00 am, you **MUST** enter the building and sign them in. Staff members are not allowed to sign in/out students. Parents are asked to have students open doors on their own.

STUDENT PICK-UP

Car riders and After School Program Students will be released at 2:30. Parents are asked to pick up these students at the front of the school. **Do not park along the curb.** If a student will not be picked up immediately after school, the parent is requested to send a note to school with the student that morning or call the school secretary.

IF YOU ARE LATER THAN 2:45 P.M. PICKING UP YOUR CHILD, HE/SHE WILL BE PLACED IN THE AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM FOR PROPER SUPERVISION. THE PRICE FOR THIS SERVICE WILL BE \$25.00 PER DAY, PER CHILD PLUS A ONE TIME \$10.00 REGISTRATION FEE.

STUDENT HEALTH/SAFETY

Emergency Evacuation: In the event of an emergency evacuation of the school building, students will follow the direction given by their teachers. Students will leave their classroom in an orderly fashion and move quickly to their designated areas under the supervision of their teachers.

Fire and Tornado Drills: The school will conduct several fire and tornado drills during the school year. These drills will not be announced. Therefore, students should assume that there is the possibility of a fire or a tornado whenever the alarm is sounded. Students should remain calm and follow the directions of their teacher to ensure the safety of everyone in the school.

Food Allergies: Students with food allergies must have written documentation from their physician in order to omit a food item from their lunch tray. Documentation must be in the student's permanent folder. Students who are not drinking milk with their meal due to a documented allergy may bring a drink from home, or in some cases a juice can be provided. These students and those who bring a lunch from home may bring what they are going to drink in a thermos or unbreakable container.

****Breakable containers and soft drinks in their original containers are not allowed.**

Head Lice:

Definition: Infestation of the hair, with adult lice, larvae, or nits (eggs).

Etiology

1. *Pediculus humanus capitis* – the head louse.
2. Head lice in school-aged children and pubic lice infestations in adolescents and young adults occur in epidemic proportions in the United States and other countries. Head lice occur in all socio-economic groups.
3. Under optimum conditions, the eggs of lice hatch in a week, and sexual maturity is reached approximately two (2) weeks. The female louse lays 5-10 eggs a day and has a life span of approximately 30 days.
4. Transmission occurs by direct contact with infested individuals or indirectly by contact with their personal belongings, combs, brushes, headgear and clothing.

Subjective

Intense itching of the scalp, skin or trunk which may lead to complications such as impetigo, furuncles, and enlarged cervical lymph nodes.

Due to the impossible and very probable epidemic infestation of pediculosis in the school environment the Board of Education deems it necessary to immediately isolate someone exhibiting pediculosis. The student with pediculosis will be advised to see his/her physician or public health nurse for treatment.

Contact

The school principal is the contact for each school for questions regarding the presence of head lice at school.

Notice

When a case of head lice is discovered in a particular classroom a letter will be sent home to the child's parents outlining the procedures to be followed.

If the student has a second infestation, the parents must present a certificate of treatment from the Health Department, a physician, or a Harris County School Nurse before the student can be readmitted to school. Another letter will be sent home to all other members of the class advising the parents that a case of head lice was discovered in the classroom.

STUDENT INSTRUCTION

Park Elementary believes that every student can learn and that it is the responsibility of educators to help each student reach his/her potential. Each student should be recognized and developed. An education should teach a child to respect him/herself, peers, adults, and public property. To ensure that needs are met, Park Elementary provides the following programs:

The state-funded **Pre-K program** is for children that turn four years old by September 1st. These children attend school for the entire school day and each class serves a maximum of 22 students. The program uses the High Scope Curriculum, which fosters children's thinking skills and prepares them for the Kindergarten curriculum. This program also provides families with a Resource Coordinator for support and educational opportunities. The coordinator may also serve as a link to appropriate community resources as needed.

The **Early Intervention Program (EIP)** is a program that provides additional individualized instruction in reading and math for students who demonstrate a need in these areas. The purpose of the Early Intervention Program is to provide additional instructional resources to help students who are performing below grade level obtain the necessary academic skills to reach grade level performance in the shortest possible time. The models for EIP instruction are based on the needs of the students.

The **Special Education program** is designed to meet the needs of individual students with special needs. Referrals to special agencies concerning physical, academic, emotional needs can be handled through the RTI Team. This program is also designed to meet the needs of the academically advanced student (The Gifted Program).

IDEA - Child Find

The purpose of Child Find is to identify, locate, and evaluate children and youth, birth to age 21, who are suspected of, or have a disability or developmental delay. Harris County Schools serves children ages 3 through 21 with identified special education needs. Please contact the Office of Federal Programs if you have any questions or if you know of a child with a disability at (706) 628-4206.

The Harris County Board of Education provides an **enrichment program** for those students who are gifted in the areas of mental ability, achievement, creativity, or motivation. In order to maximize instructional materials and provide a supportive environment for these students, a centralized program is offered. Gifted students from Mulberry Creek Elementary currently attend the Odyssey program at MCE, on designated days. It is the goal of the program to encourage students to reach their potential while working on interesting and innovative assignments.

STUDENT REPORTING ACTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Students wishing to report instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by teachers, administrators or other school employees towards a student shall do so utilizing the process listed below established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and implemented by the Harris County Board of Education. This shall not prohibit students from reporting the incident to law enforcement authorities. **Students are prohibited by Georgia law and Harris County Board of Education policy from falsifying, misrepresenting, or erroneously reporting incidents of alleged inappropriate behavior by school personnel and may be disciplined for doing so.**

(a) Any student (*or parent or friend of a student*) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other school system employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.

(b) Any teacher, counselor or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school principal or principal's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. *If the principal is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee.*

(c) Any school principal or principal's designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 or 20-2-1184 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

TARDIES

It is very important to be at school ready to begin at 8:00 a.m. Students who are frequently tardy miss important instructional activities and can present a disruption to instruction in the classroom. A student will not be tardy due to late bus arrival. Students who are brought to school by the parent and arrive late must be signed in at the front office **by the parent**. According to MCE's policy on tardies, after a student has been tardy 5 times the counselor will send a letter to

the parent. After 10 tardies the parent will be contacted for a conference with school administrators.

TELEPHONE USAGE

Students may not receive telephone calls at school. Students may use the phone in emergency situations. School staff members will relay messages to students in classrooms regarding emergencies and transportation changes.

TEST SECURITY PLAN

District and School Test Security Plans may be accessed through the school and district web site. If students or parents have questions or concerns regarding the security of testing, please contact the school testing coordinator.

TITLE IX

Title IX is a federal law which protects students and employees from sex discrimination. Its regulations apply to all educational programs, preschool through graduate school, which receives federal aid. Any school system that receives federal money, services or property must comply with Title IX.

TRANSFER AND WITHDRAWAL

Parents should notify the school office at least one day before planning to withdraw or transfer their child. This will allow time to complete transfer forms and necessary records. All textbooks and library books must be returned to the school before records can be released.

TRANSPORTATION

Riding a school bus is a privilege and students are expected to follow all rules of conduct which are given to them in the Harris County Board of Education Student Behavior Code and Attendance Protocol on the first day of school.

To request a bus assignment please fill out a bus transportation form. Please note this can take up to 10 days to have a bus assigned from the transportation department. Once the bus is setup, you will be notified of the students' bus information.

TRUANCY

Truancy is an unexcused absence. An excessive number of unexcused absences will be grounds for legal action in accordance with the attendance laws of Georgia. An excessive number of absences may result in the school requiring a doctor's excuse for every absence. Students with 15 or more days absent from school may be denied credit for the year.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

Having carefully weighed and balanced the rights of privacy of students and staff against the District's duty to maintain order and discipline, the Board of Education has authorized the use of video camera surveillance in its transportation vehicles and on school grounds. The use of video recordings from surveillance equipment shall be subject to other policies of the District including policies concerning the confidentiality of student and personnel records. Video surveillance shall only be used to promote the order, safety, and security of students, staff, and property.

VISITORS

All visitors must request admittance via the security entry system, give name and purpose for visit, answer any questions for security, enter and report to the front office to receive a visitor's pass. When parents wish to visit the child's classroom, please notify the teacher in advance. If a conference is needed, please make an appointment. Please be advised that the classroom teacher will be unavailable to have a conference with parents during instructional time or during the time he/she is supervising students. A separate conference time must be scheduled with the teacher to discuss questions or concerns. Parent conferences may be requested at any time by calling the school at (706) 320-9397. Conferences may be scheduled after school from 2:45 p.m. - 3:25 p.m. or during the teacher's planning period.

Parent Acknowledgement of Mulberry Creek Elementary Parent Student Handbook

*** Please sign and return this page via email to your child's teacher.***

Parents/Guardian: After reading the contents of the Mulberry Creek Parent Student Handbook, please make sure that you and your child understand the policies, rules, and procedures stated therein. Sign the assurance below and return this page to your child's teacher.

Parent/Guardian and Student Assurance

I have read and understand the contents of the Mulberry Creek Student Handbook. I have allowed my child to read or read to him/her the policies, rules, and procedures therein.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____