

Memphis Merit Academy Charter School



FAMILY HANDBOOK 2023-2024

Caleshia Young, Director of Lower School

www.memphismeritacademy.org

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Main Office: 901-617-3690



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Dear Founding Memphis Merit Families,

We are honored to welcome you to Memphis Merit Academy Charter School. You have chosen to be a part of FOUNDING with us. You are a part of history in the making! Memphis Merit Academy holds a high standard for excellence, providing an academically challenging, disciplined, supportive, and joyful school for the children of the Parkway Village community. We are thrilled that you have made Memphis Merit Academy your school of choice, and we welcome you to our school community. We know that our success as a school depends on the support of our families, and we look forward to having a positive partnership with you. We expect a lot from the members of the Memphis Merit community, and in turn, you can expect a lot from us.

As a family, please take the time to read through our entire handbook. We will revise and improve the handbook annually, so re-reading is important for returning families as well. The following pages clarify many of the essential details for families to participate fully in our community and will help you become familiar with the school procedures, policies, and practices. When you have finished reading the handbook, you should complete and detach the mandatory signature page, which is located at the end of this handbook. Please return this page to the main office.

While this handbook is very detailed, we know that it will not address all of the questions that you may have about the Memphis Merit way. If you do have any additional questions, please contact the school for any clarification. We look forward to embarking on this journey with you, as we set your child on the path to college.

Committed to excellence,

Lakenna Booker, Founder & Head of School



LEADERSHIP STAFF

Executive Leadership



Lakenna Booker, Founder and Head of School | Mrs. Lakenna Booker, MAT, has an extensive background in STEM education with nearly 15 years in urban education. She published *The 5E's of Inquiry-Based Science* with Teacher Created Materials, Inc. The Parkway Village community is home for Mrs. Booker, and where many of her childhood memories were made. She attended Goodlett Elementary School and graduated valedictorian from Sheffield High School in 2002, both located in the Parkway Village community. Through philanthropy from the Memphis Rotary Club, she attended Phillips Exeter Academy, a prestigious boarding school in Exeter, NH. The experience showed Mrs. Booker that education looked different in other places and that genius is relative. After completing a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a concentration on Cell and Molecular Science from the University of Tennessee at Martin, she joined an alternative teacher licensing program through the University of Memphis. Mrs. Booker quickly understood her purpose in life is to teach and unlock opportunity for others through the impartation of knowledge. After almost a decade in the urban classrooms and schools, Mrs. Booker joined the Building Excellent Schools Fellowship to train, lead, and found Memphis Merit Academy in response to the literacy data in the Parkway Village community. As the Founder and

Head of School of Memphis Merit Academy she oversees, sets, and monitors the overall instructional, operational, and financial direction of the school. Mrs. Booker has successfully secured more than \$3 million in private, federal and foundational philanthropy since the commencement of the organization to deliver on the mission of Memphis Merit Academy Charter School. Mrs. Booker is unapologetic about the work of starting a high performing charter school in her childhood community.



Caleshia Young, Founding Director of Lower School | Mrs. Caleshia Young is a Memphis native and licensed educational leader with nearly two decades of experience in urban schools in both traditional public schools and the charter sector. Mrs. Young is a proud graduate of East High (2001) and earned notable academic achievements and scholarships from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Mrs. Caleshia Young holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Ecology (Child Development), and a Master of Science in Child & Family Studies (Early Childhood Education) from the University of Tennessee. Mrs. Young successfully completed Relay Graduate School of Education's Instructional Leadership Professional Development. Moreover, Mrs. Young earned an Educational Specialist degree in Educational Leadership and is a certified school administrator. Mrs. Young leverages her experiences as a former principal, Founding Dean of Instruction, Academic Coordinator, and Instructional Facilitator to make key instructional decisions. Young's multifaceted approach to impact change in early childhood education, specific expertise in literacy, and her intrinsic desire to be a change agent in the Greater

Memphis community makes her uniquely fit for the role of Founding Director of Lower School for Memphis Merit Academy Charter School. As a lifelong resident of Memphis, and a career educator, Mrs. Young is attuned to the work of continuing to found a high performing charter school for MMA families. Mrs. Young firmly believes all children deserve a joyful and rigorous learning environment. As both an experienced educator and mother of three children, Mrs. Young advocates for equity in education for all children.



Betty Michelle McCline, Founding Director of Operations | Ms. Betty Michelle McCline brings a wealth of experience with her formal background in Human Resources as a HR Generalist and founding experience as an Office Manager and Operations Manager from other charter networks in the city. Ms. McCline has earned a Masters of Science in Human Resources Management and a Bachelor of Business Administration in Management. During her tenure in charter schools, she quickly discovered her passion and drive for ensuring families have exactly what they need. The experience showed Ms. McCline parents are partners in the work of running an effective school focused on student achievement. Ms. Betty Michelle McCline works in tandem with the Head of School to ensure the coordination and implementation of Federal Programs to ensure full alignment to the annual budget. Moreover, Mrs. McCline has worked alongside the Head of School in project management of nearly \$12M of facility construction to implement the school model of MMA. Ms. McCline ensures operational, financial, and stakeholder excellence through strategic communication and collaboration across the school, authorizer, and community. She is overjoyed to work with the Founding Families of Memphis Merit Academy Charter School.



OVERVIEW

Memphis Merit Academy Charter School will open its doors to 330 Kindergarten- Fourth Grade students on August 3, 2022. We are committed to being one of the highest performing elementary public schools in the City of Memphis and our nation. We will achieve our mission by providing every student with the academic skills, knowledge, and ethical foundation to be set on the path to college from the very beginning of their education.

MISSION

Through rigorous academics, high-quality instruction, and character development, Memphis Merit Academy Charter School educates all students in kindergarten through eighth grade for success in high school, college, and life.

VISION

National studies and local priorities echo the same reality: an early literacy foundation is critical to school and life success, and the measurable literacy rates of children as early as third grade are bellwethers of future performance and the probability of the children those rates represent leading lives of promise and opportunity. It is upon such studies and priorities that Merit Memphis Academy Charter School ("Memphis Merit Academy") is founded.

Our vision is one of educational excellence, starting in kindergarten, and one that matriculates eighth graders into high school ready for and inspired towards a rigorous college preparatory course of study in pursuit of their life's dream. ACT Research and Policy (2013) stated that "[g]etting students off to a good start in preschool and the elementary grades is vitally important for several reasons: **(1) Learning takes time; (2) Learning is cumulative; (3) Student interests often develop at an early age; (4) Empirical evidence shows the difficulty of catching students up in middle and high school.**" Memphis Merit Academy is founded to give families in Memphis the ability to choose a high-quality, seamless³ K-8 public school option that prepares their children for entrance to the high school of their choice and access to an honors and Advanced Placement course of study within that choice. Students who graduate from our school will have a clear picture of what college looks like and will be able to articulate what is required for entrance, and they will have the content knowledge, skill, and test scores that position them to build the high school transcript that will open those college doors to them.

Aligned to the priorities of Shelby County Schools which holds as its 2025 Goal that "90% of SCS third graders are reading on grade level"⁴ and the State of Tennessee which further holds that "Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark upon their chosen path in life."⁵ The State of Tennessee also holds that "75 percent of Tennessee third graders will be proficient in reading by 2025."⁶ **Memphis Merit Academy believes that a rigorous, high-quality, college preparatory education is a civil right for all children.** At the heart of the civil rights struggle in our country, we believe that regardless of socio-economic status, household income, ethnicity, native language, household educational level, or race, all children have the right to receive a high-quality education on which each child can build a future of possibility and promise.

Memphis Merit Academy will set all students on the path to college from the beginning of kindergarten by providing rigorous curriculum thoroughly aligned to state and national standards, high-quality instruction that intentionally places every child on a measurable track of success, and character development that will nurture our children and our communities and allow them to grow and thrive.

To provide an excellent K-8 educational option to Memphis families and students who do not currently have access to one, we will strategically target economically disadvantaged, majority African-American and Hispanic students residing in the Parkway Village and Oakhaven communities. As outlined below, at the center of our vision are three core components of our instructional program:



Rigorous Academics | Our instruction will foster the critical and analytical thinking necessary to meet Tennessee Academic Standards and Common Core State Standards. Critical thinking is not only for high-achieving students but can and should be taught to all students. From kindergarten, students will learn to support their answers and assertions with textual evidence in reading and explain their work in mathematics, both verbally and in writing. They will learn diverse problem-solving strategies to break down complex problems.

High-Quality Instruction | Our curriculum design and instructional strategies are rooted in scientifically-based research and successful practices of high-poverty, high-performing schools. Vertically-aligned lesson planning vetted by the Head of School (Years 1 - 2) and Dean of Academics (Years 3 - 4) with the oversight of the Head of School (Year 3) and Director of Lower School (Year 4 - Full scale), will allow teachers to be ready to deliver high-quality instruction. Further, the Student Supports Coordinator (Year 1 - 3) and Dean of Student Supports (Years 4- 6) and the Director of Student Supports (Year 7 - Full scale) will support teachers in addressing students' needs based on their IEP. This strategic staffing coupled with powerful execution and instruction by teachers will lay a solid foundation in literacy and math for our students in the Lower School (K-4) to ensure access and mastery of diverse content and knowledge in the Upper School (5-8).

Character Development | To navigate college successfully as well as in their daily lives, students must develop strong character informed by values. Memphis Merit Academy will provide (a) intentionally developed, sequential lessons on positive character qualities throughout the year, (b) daily Morning Motivations that reinforce values- based actions, and (c) weekly Community Circles (MERIT Fests) that celebrate students' demonstration of our core RISE Merit values: Respect, Integrity, Self-Determination, and Excellence. .In alignment with the three core components that propel our mission, five core principles guide our vision.

CORE VALUES

School and life success depends on the internal character and hard skills an individual develops in their formative years. We strategically develop in students the school's RISE with MERIT values-Merit, Respect, Integrity, Self-Determination, and Excellence. Board members and staff of Memphis Merit emulate our values in their actions, with teachers providing explicit teaching and modeling of them. At Memphis Merit, we "RISE with Merit."

- **MERIT:** We are committed to achieving our mission - setting every Memphis Merit Academy student on the path to college. Every action aligns with and contributes to a merit based education.
- **Respect:** We value and appreciate each other, as demonstrated through our words and actions. We treat others the way we want to be treated.

- **Integrity:** Our actions are congruent with our beliefs and words. We always through

on what we say we are going to do.

- **Self-Determination:** We do whatever it takes to achieve our goals, exuding steadfast commitment and positivity in the face of challenges. We value the process, no matter how demanding, just as much as the outcome.
- **Excellence:** We understand that we are what we repeatedly do - Excellence is not an act, but a habit. We distinguish ourselves by the way we consistently execute on the details.

RESPECT

The most important value at Memphis Merit is respect. Helping students develop the art of respect is a school-wide goal and will be modeled by the adults at Memphis Merit. The code serves as the operational glue that holds the community together. The students are expected to demonstrate the following elements of respect:



- **SELF-RESPECT** - by their manner and in their school uniform dress, students are to carry themselves with a sense of dignity.
- **RESPECT TO PEERS** - by showing support and encouragement; by refraining from insulting, bullying, or humiliating others; and by refraining from physically, emotionally or sexually harassing other students.
- **RESPECT FOR ALL ADULTS** - by listening and following instructions; by using appropriate tone of voice; by honoring a teacher's need to present a lesson to the entire class; by demonstrating an awareness of the appropriate time and place to disagree with a teacher's decision; and by accepting feedback.
- **RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCES** - by demonstrating sensitivity to physical, cultural, religious, gender, and sexual orientation differences, and by refraining from the use of stereotypes.
- **RESPECT FOR PROPERTY** - by respecting their personal property and the property of other students; by maintaining their textbooks and other school materials; and by caring for the school grounds and property, especially by pitching in to keep them clean and neat. (Items that could be used to deface property are forbidden in school.)

SCHOOL, FAMILY, STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Memphis Merit Academy has high expectations for our staff, families and students. We believe that a high-quality education requires the coordination and commitment of everyone involved in our students' education. We will foster a supportive environment for both academics and behavior. We know that you have made a choice to attend our school and we promise to always prioritize your child's education and future. We are a public charter school, therefore signing these contracts is not required for attendance in our school. We need to ensure there is clarity on our expectations at Memphis Merit Academy. The contracts below outline the expectations for the school, family and student to ensure accountability to our mission.

SCHOOL, FAMILY & STUDENT CONTRACT

PARENT/FAMILY CONTRACT

Attendance & Promotion

1. I commit to supporting Memphis Merit Academy's rigorous academic program, high expectations of student behavior, and extended day and school year.
2. I commit to ensuring my child arrives at school on time, in the proper uniform, each day for a full day of learning. Exceptions are made if the child is sick or not able to participate in daily instruction due to a family emergency.

Homework and Academic Support

3. I commit to reviewing and monitoring my child's Lifework, academic progress, and behavior reports regularly.
4. I commit to ensuring a calm and quiet place for my child to complete lifework and read each night.
5. I will sign my child's Lifework folder and behavior log each night and support them when they need help and encouragement.
6. I commit to communicating and asking questions of Memphis Merit Academy when I need clarification about my child's educational experience and attending the re

Behavior and Dress Code

7. I understand my child will have consequences and/or loss of privileges if my child does not comply with rules and expectations of the school.
8. I understand my child's behavior will be managed through the RTI² behavior process, and a suspension may be issued for offenses outlined in our Student Discipline Policy.
9. I understand Memphis Merit Academy works to ensure a safe environment for all students and bullying will not be tolerated in any form.



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10. I understand my child will participate in a character development program.
11. I commit to ensuring my child is in the proper uniform each day.

Family Support and Communication

12. I commit to communicating and working as a part of the team to ensure my child excels both academically and behaviorally. I will review and sign daily behavior logs, progress reports, report cards, and any correspondence sent home by the school.
13. I have read and understand the Code of Conduct.
14. I commit to my giving my effort to these commitments to give my child the opportunities they deserve and need.

Parent or Guardian Signature: _____

STUDENT CONTRACT

1. I understand the core values, Mindfulness, Excellence, Resilience, Integrity, and Teamwork and will do my best to always follow them.
2. I commit to attending school every day unless I experience sickness or an emergency.
3. I commit to completing all of my assignments with excellence, giving my best work every time. 4. I commit to completing my lifework every night. The work will be neat, placed in my Lifework Folder, and submitted to my teacher daily.
5. I commit to adhering to the Code of Conduct at Memphis Merit Academy and all school functions.
6. I commit to following the Memphis Merit Academy uniform policy and dress code.
7. I commit to communicating on a regular basis with my parents/guardian about my progress including grades, assignments, goals, and my behavior.
8. I have read and understand the Code of Conduct.
9. I commit to making my best effort to these commitments to give myself opportunities I deserve and need.

Parent or Guardian on behalf of Student Signature: _____

Parent or Guardian on behalf of Student Printed Name: _____

SCHOOL CONTRACT

High-Quality Instruction and Rigorous Academics

1. We commit to being fully prepared to teach each day by completing weekly prep, anticipating student misconceptions, and reviewing data for Tier I, II, III instruction (RTI²).
2. We commit to continuous professional development and desire to refine my practice to provide students with an excellent education.

Respect and Equity

3. We commit to respecting every student and being responsive to their needs. I will ensure students respect each other at all times.
4. We commit to teaching Memphis Merit Academy's MERIT values to develop each student's character. I commit to communicating to families on each child's progress towards the MERIT values.
5. We commit to recognizing and rewarding students that are excelling through our program and providing interventions for those struggling.
6. We commit to providing a consequence for behaviors that warrant one, as outlined in our discipline policy.



Communication

7. We commit to communicating with families about each student's academic and behavior progress regularly.
8. We commit to returning parent phone calls, emails, and conference request in a timely manner. **Homework (Lifework)**

9. We commit to providing daily lifework to reinforce new learning.
10. We commit to communicating with families if a student needs more support or fails to complete lifework.

Safety

11. We commit to providing a safe school environment inclusive of all students. We commit to adhering to ADA compliance and regulations annotated in Tennessee law in regards to charter schools.
12. We have read and understand the Code of Conduct.
13. We commit to making our best effort to provide a high-quality education that provides all students with opportunities, regardless of demographics.

School Representative Signature: _____

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Memphis Merit Academy students arrive for breakfast by 7:30 AM every day, Monday-Friday and remain at school until 3:45 PM except on Fridays. The doors open at 7:30AM with the late bell ringing at 7:45am and convening Morning Motivation. On Fridays, students will be released early at 1:30PM. In the event a student is going to be absent, the parent/guardian must contact the office by 7:45AM. We commit to a daily attendance rate at or above 96%.

To succeed at Memphis Merit Academy, scholars must be present. Scholars are learning a great deal of content every day and being at school supports their success. So much learning goes on each day that cannot be sent home and made up. Students who miss a lot of school do not perform as well as those who attend every day. Therefore, we expect scholars to be at school every day unless they are legitimately sick and unable to function.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Parents and guardians are expected to call the school as early as possible but no later than 8:00AM if their child will not be attending school for any reason. Earlier, written permission is both welcomed and appreciated. Calls should be made as far in advance as possible and can be left on the school's main voicemail. **The main phone number to the school is 901-617-3690.** In phone calls, voicemails, and notes, please indicate your child's name, your relationship to the child, and the reason for and date(s) of the child's absence. If a scholar is not present by 7:50am and the school has not been notified that he or she will be absent, his or her parent or guardian will be called at home and/or work.

EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

In order for an absence to be considered excused, scholars must return to school with a note explaining the nature of the absence within three business days. Excused absences are considered through doctor's notes and parent notes; however, parent notes should not exceed five notices per year. Final approval for all notices to excuse absences is at the discretion of the Head of School. The State of Tennessee dictates what may be an excused absence. These reasons are:

- Personal illness, homebound, hospitalization of student, injury, pregnancy, circumstance; The Head of School may request a conference with the Student Support Coordinator to determine if additional supports are needed for the student due to absences after 10 days have been accumulated throughout the year. A doctor's note must accompany any additional absences for the students thereafter.
- Illness in the family requiring temporary help from the child; Serious illness or death of a student's immediate family. a physician's statement may be required.
- Death of a family member; the absence is limited to three school days.
- Head lice, up to three days per infestation.
- Recognized religious holidays regularly observed by persons of the child's faith.



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- Court appearances or legal mandates. Please note: all routine doctor and dentist appointments should be conducted outside of school hours. All other absences will be considered unexcused. Students will not be excused for routine doctor and dentist appointments, family vacations, or any other engagement. If a student is absent from school due to suspensions, these days will be treated the same as absences. If a student misses school, Memphis Merit staff will make reasonable efforts to contact the student's parent/guardian by telephone, writing, or in person.
- Student participation in school sponsored activity, high school visit, or college visit as a student representative. • Religious holidays and special regularly observed holidays by specific faith groups. Students are excused for absences of class or school day due to religious observance of a holiday deemed sacred by a religion of the student.
- Circumstances beyond the student's control at the discretion of the Head of School may be excused. • Deployment of the students' parent or guardian enlisted in the United States Armed Forces, inclusive of the National Guard or Reserve called to active duty.
 - a. The student shall be given one day of excused absence for deployment and one absence for the return for deployment of the parent or legal guardian.
 - b. Students may be given excused absences for up to ten (10) days to visit student's parent or guardian if the parent is granted rest and recuperation leave and is also stationed outside of the country. c. Students may be given excused absences for up to ten (10) days of accumulation throughout the school year for visitation during deployment of parent or guardian. The total excused absences for deployment related reasons may not exceed 10 cumulative days.
- A student may be given an excused absence when participating in a non-school sponsored event or activity at the discretion of the Head of School. The parent or guardian must provide documentation to the Office Manager of proof of participation in the activity. The documentation must be in writing at least 7 business days prior to the student's absence. Once the documentation is received parent or guardians will fill out a request for excused absence which shall include, student full name, school ID, grade, dates of the anticipated absence, reason for the absence, signature of both student and parent. The Head of School or designee will approve the request and notify the parents in writing of their status of excused absence. To ensure all students are receiving the learning and support they need to be successful in life. The Head of School may cap the number of non-school related activities deemed as excused absences. The Head of School shall not excuse more than 10 absences annually for students participating in non-school related activities. Any absence not outlined above shall be considered unexcused absences.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Any student absent from school not for the above reasons will be considered an unexcused absence. If a student has 5 or more excessive unexcused absences he/she will be deemed as truant. Memphis Merit Academy will follow Tennessee State Law (TCA 49-6-3007) when reporting truancy.

CONSEQUENCES FOR FREQUENT UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Based on Tennessee Law (TCA § 49-6-3001 c(1)), Memphis Merit will and must adhere to the following: "Every parent, guardian or other legal custodian residing within this state having control or charge of any child or children between six (6) years of age and seventeen (17) years of age, both inclusive, shall cause such child or children to attend public or non-public school, and in the event of failure to do so, shall be subject to the penalties hereinafter provided."

By law, if your child has 5 or more unexcused absences, your child's name will be reported to an attendance officer. The attendance officer has a duty to investigate to determine why the child has been absent from school. You will receive a notice informing you of the absences. In addition, the attendance officer may petition the Juvenile Courts requiring that you show cause why your family should not be subject to fines for the unexcused absences.

Three Unexcused Absences in a Semester: If a student is absent three days of school in one semester, it is considered a significant amount of time missed and raises serious concerns. At this point, parent/guardian will be asked to meet with the Head of School immediately. At this meeting, both the family and the school will discuss the problem and its



impact on the student's education and an attendance plan will be developed.

Five Unexcused Absences in a Year: If a student is absent five days of school in a year, it is considered a significant amount of time missed and a serious problem. At this point and per state law, Memphis Merit will report this educational neglect concern (truancy) to an attendance officer. A more intensive attendance plan will be developed through that process.

Nine Unexcused Absences in a Year: If a student is absent nine days of school in a year, the student is considered habitually truant from school. At this point, the student may be at risk of not being promoted to the next grade due to having not mastered the academic grade level content. The Head of School will meet with the family to discuss the issue and may take further action, as needed. Please be aware of the following specific policies pertaining to excessive absences:

- Excused absences are defined only as those that are accompanied by a doctor's note verifying the dates of absence, which were due to illness, those that are due to religious observation, those related to suspensions, or those which are due to a death in the family. Under certain circumstances, Memphis Merit will also consider student's IEPs, accommodation plans and individualized healthcare plans in determining when an absence is "excused."
- Excessive total absences are a factor in retention at all grade levels. It will be at the school's discretion to determine if retention is appropriate for the current grade.
- If a student is absent the first five (5) days of school, or at least ten (10) consecutive days during the school year, and there has been no successful contact between the family and the school to explain his or her absences, that student may lose his or her seat at Memphis Merit and may be considered un-enrolled from the school.

MAKE-UP WORK

Students will be held accountable for work missed due to absences. In the event, your child misses a day of instruction, the make-up work will be given to the Office Manager. All questions regarding student attendance and attendance records should be directed to the school's Office Manager. Students who are absent from school cannot attend or participate in any other school sponsored activities occurring on the day of the absence unless the school has given advance permission.

PUNCTUALITY AND TARDINESS *Memphis Merit values punctuality.* It is an important life skill and a show of respect to others. Just as we expect staff to be punctual for their students, families need to ensure that students arrive at school on time. This is even more important because Memphis Merit students begin their learning from the moment a student enters the building. Students are provided morning duties and work before and after breakfast. If a student is late to school, they miss brainwork morning assignments, disrupt the learning of other students, and risk falling behind. Memphis Merit's doors open at 7:30AM. Students must arrive at school between 7:30AM – 7:45AM, which is also when breakfast is served. Students arriving at 7:46 AM or later are considered tardy. Please Note: Students who arrive close to 7:50am may not have enough time to finish their breakfast, since activities start promptly at 7:45AM. Therefore, if parents and guardians want their child to receive breakfast, the students must arrive at school no later than 7:40 AM to have enough time to eat without feeling rushed. Parents or Guardians must escort late students to the Main Office to sign in, before proceeding to their classroom. Late arrivals after 7:45AM disrupt class for all students in the class and therefore should be avoided if possible. **Three late arrivals will count as the equivalent of one absence for the purposes of our attendance policy.**

CONSEQUENCES FOR TARDINESS

Two Tardies in a Month: If a student is late two times in a month, it is considered a serious issue. Families are sent a tardy concern notification from the school after the second tardy in a month to serve as a notice of concern in the attempt to prevent the concern from escalating. Three tardies equals one absence.



Five Tardies in a Month: If a student is late five times in a month, it is considered a severe issue. The teacher will call the parent/guardian, and the problem will be discussed and an “On Time” plan will be developed. The plan must be implemented successfully before the student is allowed full access to school extracurricular activities.

Nine Tardies in a Semester: If a student is late nine times in a semester, it is considered a severe issue and will be documented on the child’s report card. At Family Achievement Conferences for the semester, a school administrative member will meet with the family to revise the “On Time” plan.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If there is inclement weather conditions such as, but not limited to, snow, Memphis Merit Academy will follow the direction of Shelby County Schools cancellation policies. If Shelby County Schools is closed, so is Memphis Merit Academy. We will make announcements of closure on social media, local television or radio stations, and on our school website.

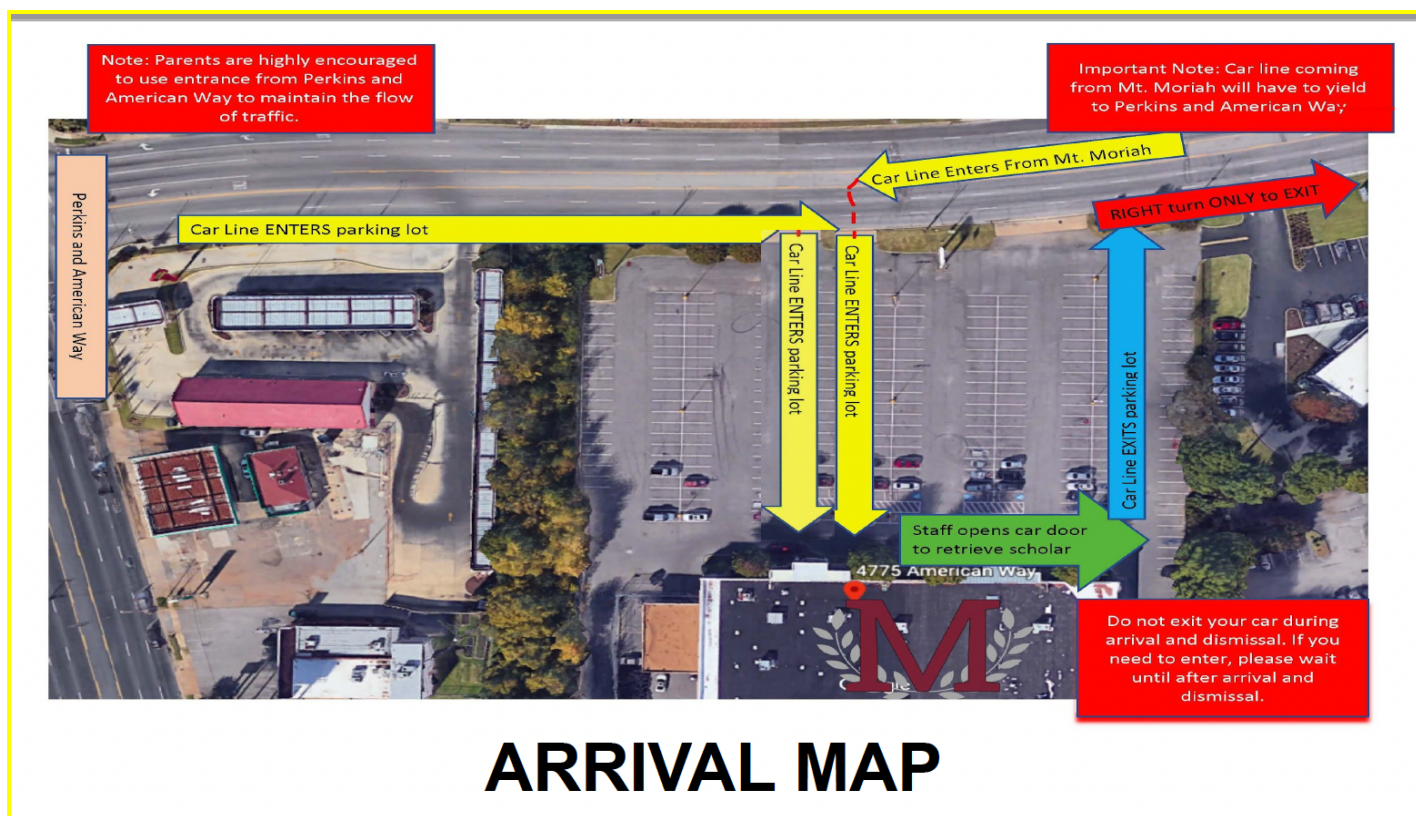
ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

ARRIVAL Memphis Merit opens its doors at 7:30AM every day, no sooner. Students are welcome to arrive as early as 7:30AM to eat breakfast, complete their brainwork, and read independently. Students may not enter the building before 7:30AM unless an appointment has been arranged in advance with a specific staff member.

DISMISSAL Students will be dismissed from school at 3:45PM on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Students will be dismissed at 1:30PM on Friday to allow for professional development of staff and teachers. Parents and guardians who arrive before the dismissal time must wait outside the school building until students are dismissed. If parents or guardians need to speak to a teacher or conduct any other classroom business, this should occur after dismissal when teachers and staff are available.

ID REQUIREMENTS Anyone picking up a scholar will be asked to provide a photo ID and Office staff will ensure that name on ID matches one of the individuals stated on the authorized pick up form. **There will be no exceptions.** Memphis Merit provides aftercare childcare from 4:00PM-5:45PM. By 3:55 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and 1:45 PM on Friday, all students must be picked up. **Failure to do so will result in a late charge of \$1.00 per minute. Any child not picked up by 4:15PM will be invoiced for the daily rate for aftercare.** All fees are expected to be paid promptly and will remain outstanding until paid. Please note that any money submitted to the school must first be applied to any outstanding balances before it can be applied to other fee-based activities. The same fee applies to students who return to the school due to not being picked up at their bus stop. Fees will be calculated based on the time of dismissal until the parent retrieves the child at the school.

CAR DROP OFF AND PICK UP In order to ensure that our arrival and dismissal processes run smoothly, safely, and efficiently, it is imperative that all families follow the directions below. There should be no variation from this plan unless advised by the staff of Memphis Merit Academy.



ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL DIRECTIONS: Due to limited street and safety, families are not able to park and walk to retrieve their child. **Parent/Guardians or Designated Pickup Persons must enter the car dismissal line.** Please note that in order to enter the school using the directions below, you must have your scholar's dismissal tag in your dashboard window. If not, you must park in the Memphis Merit parking lot and sign out your scholar from the front office. Then, once car rider dismissal is over (4:00pm Monday – Thursday and 1:45pm on Friday), they will be escorted to the front office at the end of dismissal.

Enter Memphis Merit Academy from the northernmost entry point.

- If entering the parking lot from South Perkins, enter the first entry point into the parking lot. • If entering the parking lot from Mt. Moriah, enter the second entry point into the parking lot. Note: This entry point onto the parking lot is mandatory to proceed into our car dismissal line, as it prevents traffic build-up onto the busy street of American Way and maximizes our car dismissal flow. • Pull into the Memphis Merit parking lot and follow the traffic pattern, which loops you around the parking lot.
- Once stopped at the numbered pick up zone, a Memphis Merit staff member will escort your child to the car at dismissal and to the school during arrival.
- To exit, head out of Memphis Merit's parking lot following the traffic pattern and turn right at the end of the parking lot.

If you do not have your scholar's dismissal tag in your dashboard window, you cannot enter the school's dismissal line. Instead, you must park in the Memphis Merit parking lot and sign out your scholar from the front office. Then, once car rider dismissal is over (4:00pm Monday – Thursday and 1:45pm on Friday) they will be escorted to the front office with scholars who were not picked up during dismissal. Parents/Guardians or their designees may pick students up directly from school at dismissal time through the car dismissal process. Parents should not go to the classroom to dismiss their students before the regular dismissal time, as this is very disruptive to class. Students being picked up by a parent or guardian must be picked up by 4:00pm.



Families who drive students to school in the morning are expected to adhere to the Memphis Merit Drop-Off Procedure. A Memphis Merit staff member will be there to greet the car and escort the student safely into the building.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Parents and guardians will not be allowed to pick up students early except for in pre-planned extenuating circumstances. Parents should contact the school in advance and provide a signed note to the school explaining the situation surrounding an early dismissal. **However, even in extenuating circumstances and due to our dismissal schedule, early dismissals will not be permitted after 3:00 PM on Monday- Thursday and after 1:00PM on Friday.** In addition, the parent or guardian must sign the student out with the Main Office before the student will be allowed to be dismissed from school grounds. Anyone who picks up the child from school will be required to show proof of ID and must be noted on the child's records for pickup.

In order to minimize disruptions to class, we ask that notification regarding early dismissals be made as far in advance as possible, but no later than 24 hours prior to the early dismissal. Doctor and dentist appointments should be limited to non-school hours to avoid students missing class time. Parents and guardians should inform the classroom teachers of early dismissals in written form by sending a note in the child's Lifework folder. Teachers will then be responsible for having the student prepared with materials at the requested time in order to minimize disruption to class time. Failure to submit 24 hours advance written notification will result in your child's lifework folder not being updated and ready for early dismissal. However, if a family does not submit prior notification and the scholar leaves without their lifework folder, they have the option to return after dismissal to receive the folder. The school will record dismissals as absences when the child has been at school for less than three and a half hours. In general, students must be present for at least 3 1/2 hours of the allotted instructional time on a given day in order to be considered present.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

In alignment to commitments signed in the parent/guardian contract, we expect our parents to participate in the child's learning via the following ways, but not limited to: (1) University Nights, (2) Parent/Teacher Conferences, and (3) any requested meeting from school to enhance their child's learning. Throughout the year, we will host activities to engage our students and families in their community such as Community Circle, community service events, Muffins with Moms, Donuts with Dad, and Grandparent's Day. The Family MERIT Council will serve as our Parent Advisory Council.

HEALTH

In the event a student becomes ill during school hours or is ill during the school day and not able to stay in class, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up the child for early dismissal. Therefore, accurate emergency contact information is needed on file for adequate communication. If a child needs to take any prescription medicine the parent/guardian must obtain the appropriate documentation from the doctor giving school staff permission to administer it to your child. If at any time during the school year your child contracts one of the following infectious diseases, please seek medical attention and avoid bringing the child to school. The following diseases, but not limited to, apply: flu, chickenpox, conjunctivitis, strep throat, lice, stomach flu/virus, ringworm.

LIFEWOR (HOMEWORK)

Lifework is a vital component of our academic program. **Therefore, Memphis Merit Academy will assign homework every night, including weekends.** We believe it is vital for parents/guardians to review their child's homework each night. Life Work includes 20 minutes of required reading every night, including weekends, holidays, and vacations. All students will be given a Memphis Merit folder that includes the work that needs to be completed as well as a nightly Reading Log. If Life Work is consistently late, missing, incomplete, or of poor quality, the parent or guardian will be notified. Lifework must be completed in full and meet the high standards that Memphis Merit Academy sets for effort



and presentation. Reading Logs must be filled out properly, completely, and signed by a guardian; all Lifework must be completed neatly and thoroughly and returned with the child in the folder.

Memphis Merit folders will be turned in to teachers every morning as soon as the student arrives at school. Students are expected to complete their Lifework assignments each day. If Lifework is missing, incomplete, or of poor quality, the parent or guardian will be notified. Lifework completion percentages will be reported as a grade and reflected on progress reports and report cards. Extracurricular activities are incentivized with lifework completion as part of the criteria. Failure to complete lifework may result in the loss of privileges or participation in extracurricular activities. Continuous or excessive lifework incompleteness will result in follow up with the Head of School and/or Student Support Coordinator.

MEMPHIS MERIT LIFEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The teacher should:

- Create meaningful assignments
- Make sure that Lifework is recorded on the daily log
- Be certain that every assignment is clearly understood
- Relate the assignment to what was learned in class
- Vary the types of assignments
- Use Lifework as a way to check for understanding of the skill and content
- Provide immediate feedback when assignments are completed

The student should:

- Promptly inform parents/guardians of the Lifework assignment by showing them the daily Lifework Log ●
- Be responsible for completing assignments on time, accurately, and neatly
- Complete missing assignments due to absences
 - Read every day
 - Always try his/her best

The parent should:

- Provide time and a quiet place for students to study
 - Help the student develop responsibility by completing all of their assignments
 - Be aware of all assignments (by looking at the Lifework Log), review the child's work, and assist as needed ●
- Make sure that every assignment is completed to Memphis Merit's standards
- Talk to their child about what he or she learned at school and encourage child to develop a positive attitude about learning
 - Read to or with their child every night for 20 minutes and sign the reading log Memphis Merit Academy ●
- Provide time for their child to read to them
- Contact the teacher or Student Supports Coordinator if they/their child needs assistance with any specific assignment(s)

ASSESSMENTS

In addition to traditional classroom assessment measures, we use a standard assessment system to determine students' reading levels. The STEP Assessment will be administered five or six times a year in grades K-3. This one-on-one reading assessment gives teachers and parents important information regarding reading fluency, phonics development, and comprehension. These results will determine the reading grade level that will be noted on the report cards. Interim assessments in Math, Reading and Writing will be administered 4 to 6 times per year. All scholars take the NWEA MAP test 3 times annually, in fall, winter, and spring.

PROGRESS REPORTS, REPORT CARDS, AND SCHOOL-PARENT MEETINGS

Teachers and staff will use daily MERIT progress reports and report cards to communicate students' academic and behavioral performance. Report Cards must be signed and returned to school. Any student at risk for academic failure is required to have a parent-teacher conference to discuss support.

PROMOTION POLICY



Memphis Merit Academy Charter School 2023-2024 Student Handbook and Student Discipline

Memphis Merit Academy's promotion policy is rooted in a balance of understanding that while students learn at different rates and may experience plateaus at different times as they grow, mastery of grade level academic standards is the best measure for promotion to the next grade level. It ensures that a student can be successful in the academic challenges of the next grade level. Grade-level promotion is determined based on attendance, student mastery of content as depicted in final grades, and final exam requirements.

In order to be promoted to the next grade, three factors are considered: attendance, overall reading level, and grade-level standard mastery, as cited on the report card. Students who accumulate more than 9 absences during the school year will be at risk for retention in their current grade-level. Please refer to the attendance policy section of this handbook for more details on this policy. Please note that absences resulting from out-of-school suspensions are not excused. Students who are not reading on grade level by the end of the academic year are eligible for retention, and students who are reading more than half a year below grade level according to the final assessment results may be in jeopardy of being retained in their current grade-level. Parents of students who are in jeopardy of being retained will receive notice of this possibly in writing at the end of the second semester. Promotion recommendations are made by classroom teachers, and final promotion decisions will be made by the Head of School. The school reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy given special circumstances.

Scholars shall receive 18 grades per week during a 9 week period. Promotion shall be based on attainment of a grade of 70 or above in mathematics and language arts for grades 1-8. Promotion shall be based on performance as identified above (attendance, overall reading level, standards mastery) and by the Head of School. Scholars at MMA shall receive grades based on the following grading scale and weight:

The grading scale for Memphis Merit Academy is as follows:

Percentage Grade	
A	93-100 %
B	85-92 %
C	75-84 %
D	74-70 %
F	69% AND Below

Based on the following grade weights:

Weight % Category
5% Homework
5% Class Participation
40% Classwork
5% Projects, Portfolios and Presentations
45% Assessments
100% Course Grade Percentage



Conduct grades will be formulated via the following criteria:

Conduct Grade Requirements
E, Excellent 21 or more blue days, 0 red or yellow days
G, Good 0 -20 blue days, 0 red, 5 or less orange or yellow days
S, Satisfactory 0-4 red days
N, Needs Improvement 5-7 red days
U, Unsatisfactory 8 or more red days

In the event, the School leadership team determines a scholar is at risk due to online learning, the HOS will request the family to consider in person instruction based on the needs of the scholar's achievement



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Kindergarten (M-TH)				Kindergarten (F)			
Heffner/ Team A				Heffner/ Team A			
Minutes	Time		Duties and Responsibilities	Minutes	Time		Duties and Responsibilities
5	7:10-7:15	Staff Arrival	Sign in on lobby guard, take temp, sanitize hands	5	7:10-7:15	Staff Arrival	Sign in on lobby guard, take temp, sanitize hands
15	7:15-7:30	Staff Huddle	Huddle in cafeteria	15	7:15-7:30	Staff Huddle	Huddle in cafeteria
			Scholars enters classroom and gets breakfast. LT ensures all trash is thrown away, spray desks, and sanitize scholar hands. Interventionist report to arrival posts.				Scholars enters classroom and gets breakfast. LT ensures all trash is thrown away, spray desks, and sanitize scholar hands. Interventionist report to arrival posts.
20	7:30-7:50	Student Arrival/Breakfast		20	7:30-7:50	Student Arrival/Breakfast	
			7:50-8:00 Announcements Morning Motivation Zoom Link				7:50-8:00 Announcements Morning Motivation Zoom Link
25	7:50-8:15	Advisory	8:00-8:15 Culture Circle	25	7:50-8:15	Advisory	8:00-8:15 Culture Circle
			Tier 2 & 3 teachers will transition their scholars to the cafeteria to be picked up for their assigned RTI group.				Tier 2 & 3 teachers will transition their scholars to the cafeteria to be picked up for their assigned RTI group.
5	8:15-8:20	Transition to RTI		5	8:15-8:20	Transition to RTI	
45	8:20-9:05	Academic Intervention (RTI A)	All Teachers performing Tiered instruction	45	8:20-9:05	Academic Intervention (RTI A)	All Teachers performing Tiered instruction
5	9:05-9:10	Transition to Class		5	9:05-9:10	Transition to Class	
10	9:10-9:20	Math Meeting	LT leads instruction/Interventionist assists	35	9:10-9:45	Math	LT delivers instruction, Interventionist off
			Interventionist gathering data and supporting with individual misconceptions				
50	9:20-10:10	Skills Block		35	9:45-10:20	Writing	Planning/ 03 Meetings
			LT, whole class gives scholars exit ticket				LT lines students up, gives hand sanitizer, and escorts students to the cafeteria to pick up lunch
10	10:10-10:20	Exit Ticket		5	10:20-10:25	Prep Lunch/Sanitize	
			LT delivers CGI Interventionist off-Duty free lunch				LT and Interventionist assist scholars through lunch line to receive lunch and escort back to class.
25	10:20-10:45	CGI		7	10:25-10:32	Transition to Cafeteria	
			LT lines students up, gives hand sanitizer, and escorts students to the cafeteria to pick up lunch.				LT facilitates lunch in classroom, Interventionist off duty free lunch
5	10:45-10:50	Prep Lunch/Sanitize		20	10:32-10:52	Lunch	
			LT and Interventionist assist scholars through lunch line to receive lunch and escort back to class.				Throw all trash away and spray desks. Sanitize scholar hands
7	10:50-10:57	Transition to Cafeteria		5	10:52-10:57	Clean-up/Sanitize	
			LT facilitates lunch in classroom, Interventionist off duty free lunch				LT transition scholars to Enrichment
20	10:57-11:17	Lunch		3	10:57-11:00	Transition to Enrichment	
			Throw all trash away and spray desks. Sanitize scholar hands				Planning/ 03 Meetings
5	11:17-11:22	Clean-up/Sanitize					LT and Interventionist planning
40	11:22-12:02	Writing	Planning/ 03 Meetings	35	11:00-11:35	Enrichment A/B	
			Planning/ 03 Meetings				LT receives scholars from Enrichment
3	12:02-12:05	Transition to Enrichment		3	11:35-11:38	Transition to Class	
			M/W/F- P.E T/TH- Music				LT delivers instruction, Interventionist off
			LT and Interventionist in Planning/Data Sessions	35	11:38-12:13	ELA	
40	12:05-12:45	Enrichment A/B					Planning/ 03 Meetings
			LT receives scholars from Enrichment	35	12:13-12:48	CORE	
3	12:45-12:48	Transition to Class					
				5	12:48-12:53	Transition	
							Teacher signs into community circle link via zoom for whole school community circle.
20	12:48-1:08	Read Aloud	LT delivers RA and Interventionist is on planning	30	12:53-1:23	Community Circle	
							LT/Interventionist prep for dismissal: Schoolrunner reports in folder, folders in scholar hand with car number facing forward, backpacks and coats on
35	1:08-1:43	Literacy Block Rotation 1 (GR/Comp/ Blended Learning/ Life Long Readers)	LT teaching GR/RC, Interventionist LLR, Scholars on blending learning	7	1:23-1:30	Homework/Folders/Backpack	
							LT has dismissal app projected, students 100% silent, walkie talkies on, Interventionist report to dismissal posts
35	1:43-2:18	Literacy Block Rotation 2 (Blended Learning/ Life Long Readers/GR/Comp.)	LT teaching GR/RC, Interventionist LLR, Scholars on blending learning	20	1:30-1:50	Dismissal	
35	2:18-2:53	Literacy Block Rotation 3 (Life Long Readers/GR/Comp./Blended Learning)	LT teaching GR/RC, Interventionist LLR, Scholars on blending learning				
10	2:53-3:03	Exit Ticket	LT, whole class gives scholars exit ticket				
40	3:03-3:43	CORE	Planning/03 Meetings				
7	3:43-3:50	Transition for Dismissal	LT/Interventionist prep for dismissal: Schoolrunner reports in folder, folders in scholar hand with car number facing forward, backpacks and coats on				
			Lead Teacher- pull up PikMyKid App on computer, project for students, make sure that all scholars are silent, continue to assist scholars gathering backpacks, folders in scholars hands				
			Interventionist- reporting to the lobby, gather green/red flag, go to car post				
20	3:50-4:10	Dismissal					



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Memphis Merit Academy believes in providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to all students. FAPE mandates that the school provides access to general education and specialized educational services. A student may receive special education services only through the proper evaluation and placement procedure. Parent/Guardian involvement in this procedure is required. A parent or guardian who believes his/her student may have a disability that interferes substantially with the student's ability to function properly in school should contact the Head of School.

The School recognizes that it may be necessary to suspend, remove, or otherwise discipline students with disabilities to address disruptive or problem behavior exhibited not associated with the scholar's disability. The School also recognizes that students with disabilities have rights to certain procedural protections whenever school authorities intend to impose discipline upon them. The School is committed to ensuring that the procedures followed for suspending, removing, or otherwise disciplining students with disabilities are consistent with the procedural safeguards required by applicable laws and regulations.



DISCIPLINE

The practices Memphis Merit Academy employs for student behavior will provide Tier I behavioral support for all students. Our teachers will always follow these three steps when giving directions to students: (1) Clearly communicate the explicit directions they need the students to follow; (2) Positively narrate student behavior to support them in following directions; (3) Take corrective action with students still not following directions. This proactive approach will ensure that students receive the necessary information and support to be able to meet our behavioral expectations. Every staff member has been trained on Zones of Regulation to support scholars in self-regulation of their behavior.

- **Color-Based Chart** - Corrective actions will be visibly posted through a color-based chart in K-4 for students to see their progress throughout the day. Students will receive color changes up and down based on their behavior. Teachers will document student behavior in Behavior Logs that go home to families daily. Teachers will also record notes about student behavior infractions in SchoolRunner for data collection and progress monitoring of student behavior.
- **SchoolRunner** – SchoolRunner is an online platform that we will use to document and communicate student behavior for grades 5-8. We will use data collected to inform our RTI² Behavior Framework.
- **School Rules and Code of Conduct.** Memphis Merit Academy believes that a common system of rules and consequences consistently and fairly enforced by all staff will maximize student time on task and overall academic achievement.
- **Core Value Behavioral Expectations - RISE with MERIT**
 - RESPECT-** Treat others with kindness and like you want to be treated. Respect yourself, others, and school.
 - INTEGRITY-** Do what is right even if no one is watching.
 - SELF DETERMINATION** – Persevere through challenging times and learn from your mistakes.
 - EXCELLENCE**– Take ownership of your actions, your education, and your school. Do your best at all times.

COLOR CHART SAMPLE

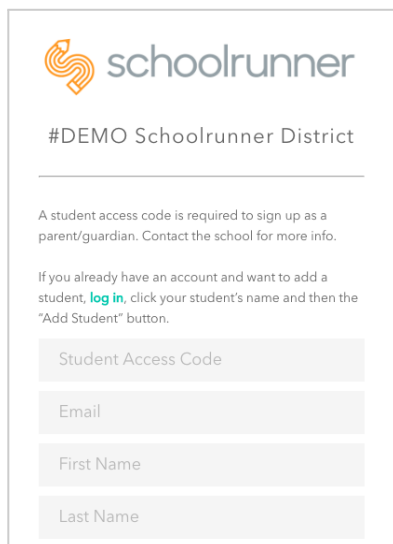
Level	Action/Consequence	Color Description
1	Exemplary behavior	Students show exemplary RISE with MERIT core values in their actions, language and/or behaviors.
2	Good behavior	The student consistently showed RISE with MERIT values during the instructional day.
3	First Warning	Teacher has given an official warning to the student as a reminder that he/she is not meeting the expectations of the classroom. Consequently, the student's clip is moved to yellow on the clip chart.
4	Mindful Moment Outside of Classroom	Student has had two warnings and needs to be away from peers and the classroom. Administration comes to the room to remove the scholar from the environment for no more than 10 minutes. Students practice coping mechanisms and self-regulation strategies to identify and address their emotions. Students are prompted to discuss how they should respond to their emotions more responsibly in the future.




5	Conference and call home	Student has not shown appropriate behavior and has failed to get back on track independently. Student automatically moves to red if he or she displays a severe misbehavior (this would include any instance of physical aggression, such as hitting, spitting, etc.). Student will be removed from class and required to conference with Red either the Head of School (Y1) or the Student Supports Coordinator These conferences are quick and direct and followed by an immediate call home. This may result in future loss of privileges (community celebrations, enrichment time, etc.).
6	Office Referral	The student has been removed from class at least two times and his/her behavior continue to be a significant disruption to the learning environment. The Head of School (Y1) or Student Supports Coordinator will contact a family member to pick up the student from school or complete work separate from his/her class with staff designee (HOS or Student Support Coordinator).

SCHOOL RUNNER

Parents and guardians can log in to Schoolrunner's portal to view information about their student(s) if they are provided with a student access code by the school. Parents/ Guardians use this code to create their own account so, although the school is responsible for distributing codes, parents/guardians themselves are responsible for creating their account with the code.



 **schoolrunner**

#DEMO Schoolrunner District

A student access code is required to sign up as a parent/guardian. Contact the school for more info.

If you already have an account and want to add a student, [log in](#), click your student's name and then the "Add Student" button.

Student Access Code

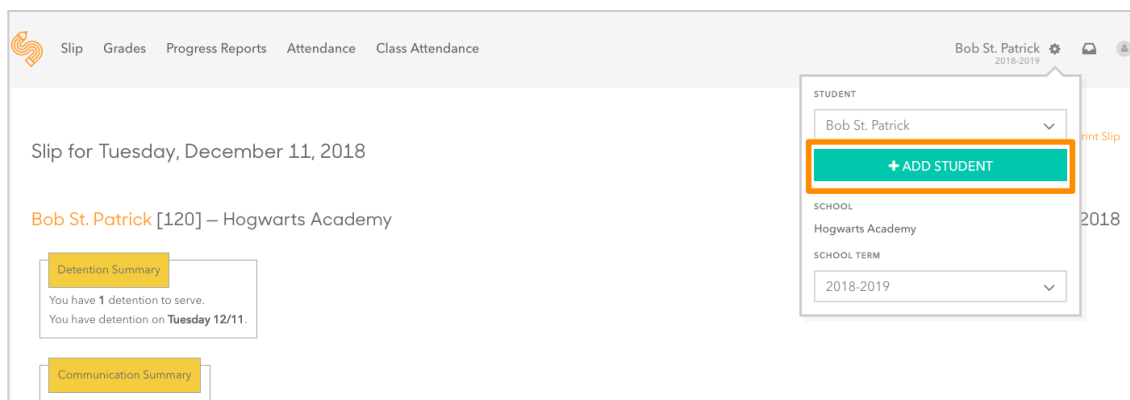
Email

First Name

Last Name

ALREADY HAVE AN ACCOUNT

Once a parent/guardian has a code, you will be able to create a Schoolrunner account with that code. You will also be able to add students to their account if they've already created an account before and are given additional access codes.



Slip Grades Progress Reports Attendance Class Attendance

Bob St. Patrick 2018-2019

Slip for Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Bob St. Patrick [120] – Hogwarts Academy

Detention Summary
 You have 1 detention to serve.
 You have detention on **Tuesday 12/11**.

Communication Summary

STUDENT
 Bob St. Patrick

+ ADD STUDENT

SCHOOL
 Hogwarts Academy

SCHOOL TERM
 2018-2019



ACCESS CODE

The Schoolrunner system generates a unique code for each student. Anyone that is given a code will be able to view that student's information once they set up their own Schoolrunner account. The code will automatically expire after your school year finishes (this will not affect any p/g accounts that have already used the code).

SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

To create and maintain a safe, supportive, fair, and consistent school community and culture, Memphis Merit Academy will suspend students from school when there are serious breaches to the discipline code and Core Values. A student may be suspended by decision of the Head of School (Years 1-3), and when the school is at full scale, by the Director of the Lower School or the Director of Upper School, as applicable. In all cases, parents or guardians will be informed of a suspension and will be required to attend a conference to address the concern and work collaboratively with the Head of School, Student Support Coordinator (Y1-3), and Dean of Culture (at full scale). In certain circumstances, the board may determine that a suspension of a greater length is appropriate. In all cases, parents or guardians will be informed of a suspension and may be required to pick the student up at the school. Memphis Merit will follow the appropriate procedures, fully complying with all applicable laws including Tennessee §49-6-3401. Causes for student suspension, both in-school and out-of-school suspension, include, but are not limited to:

- Physical harm, fighting or physical assault of another student
- Physical harm or assault of a teacher, staff member, or other adult at school
- Taking or attempting to take money or property from another student, faculty member, or school
- Constant disruptive behavior or continued and willful disobedience
- Violation of Internet Use and Technology Policy
- Excessive disrespect of teachers or peers
- Harassment or violent threats, including cyber bullying
- Open defiance of authority
- Willfully causing or attempting to cause defacement or substantial damage to school property
- Possessing, using, or dispensing illegal substances such as drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or firecrackers (Any illegal substances will also be reported to the police, as required by law.)
- Possessing or using an object that may cause harm, such as a knife or cigarette lighter
- Accruing many discipline referrals
- Failure of the parent to pick up the report card, attend the report conference, or live up to other requirements of the covenant
- Repeated in-school suspensions
- Use of inappropriate language or profanity
- Using a cell phone in school
- Engaging in sexual activity or inappropriate touching or exposure of undergarments or body parts
- Willfully causing defamation of another student's character
- Other actions deemed suspendable offenses by a School Leader

EXPULSIONS We reserve expulsions for students whose conduct constitutes a continuing danger to the physical well-being of other students and/or the staff. There will be zero tolerance for bringing a gun or deadly weapon to school or for any assault on school employees or students. A student may also be liable for expulsion for possession, use of, or selling of alcohol or controlled dangerous substances while on school property. A student with frequent suspensions and continued willful disobedience and/or open defiance of authority may also be at risk of expulsion. For a student to be expelled, the



process must be initiated by the Head of School and must include discussion with the entire faculty and a hearing with the student's parents where the Head of School is present. A student who is expelled will receive due process under Tennessee state law. At Memphis Merit, due process will include the following (subject to legal review and Board approval):

- The Head of School follows standard disciplinary policies and procedures for investigating the facts, obtaining witness statements, and ensuring adherence to due process procedures.
- If the Head of School believes expulsion is warranted, the student will be expelled.
- The Head of School reports to the Memphis Police Department any documentable or suspected incident involving illegal drugs, firearms, explosives, or other weapons outlined in TCA 39-17-1309.

Memphis Merit Academy will abide by policies outlined in the family handbook and leverage guidance found in the MSCS discipline guide linked below:

[MSCS ELEMENTARY DISCIPLINE GUIDE](#)

Memphis Merit Academy will follow the appeal guidance provided by the state of TN linked below:

[TN DOE APPEAL HEARING](#)

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION Memphis Merit may require students to serve an in-school suspension during which they are not allowed to be in their classes but must spend the school day supervised in one of the school offices while doing their schoolwork. These in-school suspensions may be given for students who demonstrate disruptive behavior or consistently violate the Code of Conduct. In-house suspensions may also be given in cases where a student needs to be sent home, but school leadership is unable to reach a parent.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR FIGHTING There is zero tolerance for fighting. In almost every case, both students will be suspended. Parents will be required to come to school and pick up the student involved in the fight on the day of the incident. The school encourages non-violent conflict resolution. Students are expected to use the techniques of conflict-resolution to settle all disputes in a nonviolent manner. Faculty will work to spot problems and students are expected to report conflicts before they escalate.

LEVELS OF INFRACTIONS

Tier 1 – Behavior Addressed through Teacher Management Strategies (Minor Infractions)	
Infractions Consequences	
Not actively participating in class; Not following directions after teacher; intentional disruption of class; no exhibiting core values; violations of school rules; out of seat without permission; tardy to class; out of uniform; not tracking the teacher; incomplete Lifework; Not participating in DEAR;	For infractions of our classroom expectations, teachers enforce consistent classroom consequences and use consistent management techniques. These consequences are explained to families during Family Orientation Sessions, and include verbal or written warnings, a timeout, a seat change within the



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talking out of turn;	classroom, loss of MERIT Rewards, written notice home, or loss of privileges, ¹ including but not limited to scholars sitting silently or away from their peers during class or during snack time or lunch; participating in detention, either during or outside of school hours; and missing school events, trips, or activities.
Tier 2 – Conference Level (Moderate Infractions)/Repeated Tier 1- triggers informal review of RTI² Behavior Framework Data Review	
Infractions Consequences	
<p>Disrespect of an adult, including rolling eyes, sucking teeth, or other such body language, defiance, or rudeness;</p> <p>Disrespect of a fellow student, such as name-calling, insulting, or excluding; Disrespect of the school, such as drawing on a table or book, taking school supplies without permission; Unsafe behaviors, such as hitting, kicking, biting, or throwing tantrums; Leaving class without permission; Use of inappropriate language; and disruption of class.</p>	<p>If a student commits a moderate infraction of our expectations and core values, a student will receive an immediate Core Value Violation. The process for disciplining Core Value Violations, which will be documented daily in SchoolRunner for parents to review student behavior.</p>
Infractions Consequences <p>Gross disrespect of a fellow student, staff member, or school property; Using or possessing over-the-counter medication inappropriately; Using or possessing tobacco products; Damaging, destroying, or stealing personal or school property or attempting to do so; Committing sexual, racial, or any form of harassment or intimidation; Bullying or cyberbullying; Skipping school or class; Using abusive, vulgar, or profane language or treatment; Making verbal or physical threats, empty or otherwise; Fighting, pushing, shoving, or unwanted physical contact; Setting off false alarms or calling in groundless threats; Gambling; Departing, without permission, from class, floor, building, or school-sponsored activity; Unauthorized use of the building elevator; Forgery of any sort, including parental signatures; Cheating or plagiarism, or copying of anyone else's work; Repeated and fundamental disregard of school policies or procedures</p>	
Tier 3– Severe Infractions	
Assault against an administrator, teacher, fellow student, or member of the school community; Repeated or excessive out-of-school suspensions; Repeated and fundamental disregard of school policies and procedures; Possession, use, or transfer of drugs and alcohol; Destruction or attempted	We have zero tolerance for behavior that constitutes danger to the physical well-being of students and/or staff. For severe infractions of this nature, students may be subject to suspension and/or expulsion by the Head of School as detailed in the response on suspension and expulsion above.



destruction of school property including arson; possession of
any weapon or prohibited dangerous object

RESPONSIBLE TECHNOLOGY USE / CODE OF CONDUCT

Memphis Merit Academy Charter School is a place of tolerance and good manners. Students may not use the network or any school's computer facilities for hate mail, defamatory statements intended to injure or humiliate others by disclosure of personal information (whether true or false), personal attacks on others, and statements expressing animus towards any person or group by reason of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Code of Conduct- The **Memphis Merit Academy Student Code of Conduct** outlined in the student handbook applies to all users of the Internet. Honesty, integrity, and respect for the rights of others should always be evident. Students shall only be identified by first names and/or initials.

The use of the Internet, including the World Wide Web must be in support of education and academic research and consistent with the educational objectives of Memphis Merit Academy Charter School. **Memphis Merit Academy Charter School** shall not be responsible for any financial obligations incurred by users of the Internet.

Cyberbullying shall result in cancellation of privileges and or other disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion. Any validated reports of Cyberbullying which contains true threats of intent to harm a person, will be reported to law enforcement. The test of "intent to harm" is whether a reasonable person sending a communication would foresee that the listener would interpret the statement as a serious expression of intent to harm.

The computer user shall be held responsible for his/her actions and activities. Unacceptable uses of the computers and/or the Internet shall result in appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension, expulsion or revoking of these privileges. If a student has questions about whether a specific activity is permitted, he or she should ask a teacher or administrator.

If a student accidentally accessed inappropriate material, he or she should back out of that information at once. Students who may inadvertently access a site that is pornographic, obscene, or harmful to minors shall immediately disconnect from the site and inform the teacher.

Students shall use the Internet search engines and/or other Internet tools only under the direction and supervision of teachers.

Regulations for the use of computers and the participation by anyone on the Internet include but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Student use of e-mail and other forms for direct electronic communication including instant messaging systems is prohibited unless authorized and directly supervised by a teacher.
- 2) School system rules prohibiting cyberbullying indecent, vulgar, lewd, slanderous, abusive, threatening, sexually harassing, or terrorizing language apply to all forms of electronic communications.
- 3) Students shall not post any e-mail or other messages or materials on Memphis Merit Academy Charter School's networks or the Internet that are indecent, vulgar, lewd, slanderous, abusive, threatening, sexually harassing, or terrorizing.
- 4) Students shall not post personal information about themselves, (last name, addresses, or telephone numbers)



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or any other person.

- 5) Students shall not abuse or waste network resources through frivolous and non-educational use or send chain letters or annoying or unnecessary letters to large numbers of people.
- 6) Students shall not access over the Internet visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, or harmful to minors.
- 7) Students shall not attempt to gain unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking" or otherwise compromise any computer or network security or engage in any illegal activities on the Internet, including willfully introducing a computer virus, worm, or other harmful program to the network.
- 8) Students shall observe copyright law and fair use guidelines. Students shall not plagiarize or otherwise use copyrighted material without permission. Students shall properly cite the source of information accessed over the Internet.
- 9) Students shall not make any purchase on the Internet while using school equipment or Internet service.
- 10) Degrading or disrupting equipment or system performance shall not be permitted.
- 11) Invading the privacy of individuals, sending of hate mail, harassing, or making discriminatory remarks or other antisocial behavior shall be prohibited.
- 12) Using an account owned by another user shall be prohibited.
- 13) Posting anonymous messages shall not be permitted.
- 14) Perusing or otherwise accessing information on manufacturing bombs or other incendiary devices shall be forbidden.
- 15) Downloading information without permission of the Director of Technology or designee shall be prohibited.
- 16) Accessing or creating exposure in any way to pictures, graphics, or other visual depictions that taken and with respect to minors, appeals to the prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion shall be prohibited.
- 17) Accessing or creating exposure in any way to pictures, graphics, or other visual depictions that describe or represent in an offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals shall be prohibited.
- 18) Accessing or creating exposure in any way to pictures, graphics, or other visual depictions that lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors shall be prohibited.
- 19) Use for product advertisement, political lobbying, or illegal activities shall be strictly prohibited.
- 20) Social Media websites will be reviewed, and restrictions will be applied as needed.
- 21) Subscriptions to list servers, bulletin boards, and online services must be pre-approved by the Head of School or his/her designee.

Non-Discrimination Policy. The officers, directors, committee members, employees, and persons served by this corporation shall be selected entirely on a nondiscriminatory basis with respect to age, sex, race, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation. It is the policy of Memphis Merit Academy Charter School not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, ancestry, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age physical ability, veteran's status, political



service or affiliation, color, religion, or national origin in admissions, hiring, selection or appointment to any office.

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING POLICY

The Board of Memphis Merit Academy prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying by or toward any students or school community members. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation or bullying is defined as any gesture or written, verbal or physical act, or any use of electronic or wireless communication (including telephone, cell phone, computer, or pager) that takes place on school grounds/property, at any school sponsored function or on a school bus and that:

- A. is motivated by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability; or,
- B. by any other distinguishing characteristic; and
- C. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of harming a student, damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his person or damage to his property; or
- D. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to cause substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Memphis Merit expects students to conduct themselves in keeping with the Core Values of Merit, Respect, Integrity, Self-Determination, and Excellence. In addition, Memphis Merit strongly believes that passive action can be as significant as active action—witnessing wrongdoing can implicate the observer. Students are expected to do what they reasonably and safely can do to divert a situation and must also inform a Memphis Merit staff member.

Consequences and/or remedial action for a student who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be varied and graded based on a variety of factors, including the developmental age and maturity levels of the parties involved, the levels of harm, the nature of the behavior, past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior and performance, and the relationships between the parties involved. Concluding whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on the facts and surrounding circumstances. Consequences for students who commit acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Remedial actions for individual students who commit such acts may include a behavioral assessment or evaluation and/or supportive interventions and referral services. Consequences and/or remedial actions for a staff member who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures, and agreements.

School leadership is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to school leadership. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. While submission of the report form is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to use the report form available from school leadership to submit a written or electronic report. Oral reports also shall be considered official reports. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on the basis of an anonymous report. School leadership, including the principal or the principal's designee, is responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, school leadership shall conduct a prompt, thorough and complete investigation of the alleged incident for any report of policy violations and complaints. Some acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may be isolated incidents requiring that the school respond appropriately to the individuals committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or parts of a larger pattern or systematic problem of harassment, intimidation or bullying that they require a response either at the classroom, school building or school district levels or by law enforcement officials. Parents shall be promptly notified in situations where students are to be or have been interviewed by law enforcement officials.

Remedial measures at both the individual and the institutional level shall be designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the problem, protect and provide support for the victim of the act, and take corrective



action for document systemic problems related to harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Institutional (i.e., classroom, school building, school district) responses can range from school and community surveys, to mailings, to focus groups, to adoption of research-based bullying prevention program models, to social skills training for students, to training for certificated and non-certificated staff, to participation of parents and other community members and organizations, to small or large group presentations for fully addressing the actions and the school's response to the actions, in the context of the acceptable student behavior and the consequences of such actions and to involvement of law enforcement officers, including school resource officers. In addition, resources (e.g., counseling) will be made available to support individual victims of harassment, intimidation and bullying and such support will be provided in a manner that does not stigmatize victim(s).

Memphis Merit prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying, be they student, school employee, volunteer, or visitor. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by school leadership after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act. Students, school employees, volunteers, and visitors may not falsely accuse another as a means of retaliation or as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with school policies, procedures and agreements. Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a visitor or volunteer, found to have falsely accused another as a means of harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be determined by school leadership after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, including reports to appropriate law enforcement officials. This policy, as part of the Memphis Merit Academy Code of Student Conduct, applies to all school grounds including school-sponsored functions and school buses. It is publicized on the Memphis Merit Academy website and is distributed annually to all school staff, students, parents and guardians.

S.T.A.R.



To help scholars learn professional habits and maximize instructional time, Memphis Merit institutes the STAR code: **S Stand/Sit up straight:** Scholars are expected to demonstrate good posture at all times, which support them to maintain full focus, or MERIT, on the lesson's objective. During instructional lessons, scholars are to sit up with backs straight, bottoms on the chair, and feet on the floor. When standing, scholars must have equal weight on both feet and their hands by their sides. When sitting on the rug, scholars must sit in a "Criss-Cross Applesauce" style and have their hands folded and in their laps.

T Track the speaker with your eyes: Scholars are expected to track the speaker at all times. When the teacher is talking, scholars need to track the teacher with their eyes. Scholars should also track any student who has been given permission to speak by the teacher. Tracking the speaker helps all scholars to stay on task and concentrate on instruction. It also demonstrates our core principle, respect.

A Always do your work and be on task: Memphis Merit scholars are expected to demonstrate purpose during every instructional minute and be on task 100% of instructional time with very few reminders by teachers. Scholars ask and answer questions by raising their hand and waiting for the teacher to call on them.

R Respect at all times: We expect scholars to demonstrate respect at all times; there are no excuses for disrespectful behavior at Memphis Merit Academy. A scholar who has a disagreement with another scholar is expected to follow Memphis Merit Academy 15 one of three actions to address the problem depending on its severity: (1) ignore the offending student, (2) ask the offending student to stop, and (3) tell the teacher. Scholars who have been corrected by a teacher may not respond to that correction in a way other than following directions given by the teacher. If a scholar feels that a consequence has been unfairly applied, the scholars may speak to the teacher after the lesson has ended. The teacher has the right to disagree with the scholar. The decisions made by the teacher will be final.

SCHOOL WIDE RULES

1. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS THE FIRST TIME GIVEN
2. KEEP HANDS, FEET, AND OTHER OBJECTS TO YOURSELF



3. RESPECT OTHERS AT ALL TIMES

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Memphis MERIT Code of Conduct outlines our tiers of infractions that violate our behavioral expectations and the corresponding consequences that result. Parents will learn about the levels of infractions and consequences and Code of Conduct during our Parent Orientation prior to the start of school. When students violate the Code of Conduct, they face a clear series of consequences with appropriately ladder steps of school responses. We have three tiers for infractions that students may commit in violation of our behavior system:

- Tier 1 – Behavior Addressed Through Teacher Management Strategies (Minor Infractions)
- Tier 2 – Conference Level (Moderate Infractions)/Repeated Tier 1- triggers informal review of RTI² Behavior Framework Data Review
- Tier 3 – Severe Infractions

CONSEQUENCES

When students break the code of conduct, the teacher will correct them, review the correct behavior, and practice behavior with them. However, if the behavior continues the students will face a series of consequences agreed upon and supported by all the teachers and parents. These consequences progress in a hierarchy designed to deter a student from poor choices. In administering consequences school personnel will take into account such factors as the severity of the offense, the age of the student offenders, students' histories or inappropriate behaviors, and any other factors deemed relevant.

DISCIPLINE PENALTIES

- Oral warning
 - Cool off time or Mindful Moment
 - Demerit deduction
 - Seat change within the classroom
 - Loss of Merit Rewards
 - Written warning
 - Written notification to parent(s)/guardian(s)
 - Sending the student to the Student Support Coordinator
 - Conference with parent(s)/guardian(s)
 - Temporary confiscation of items that are disruptive
 - Exclusion and/or removal from a particular class or event
 - Suspension from cafeteria, commons, field trips, extracurricular, or other activities or privileges ●
- In-school suspension
- Short term suspension (less than five days) from school
 - Long term suspension (more than five days) from school
 - Expulsion from school

BUS CONDUCT

Participation in bus transportation during field trips is a privilege. All scholars are expected to uphold the same behavior expectations on the bus as they do at Memphis Merit, acting responsibly and respectfully at all times. Certain additional rules will apply to the bus. The following are expectations for the bus:

- Students must be seated in their assigned seat at all times.
- Students must be respectful.
- Students must keep their hands, feet, and all other objects inside the bus at all times.
- Students must follow the code of conduct as in the classroom. Bullying behavior will not be tolerated. Fighting, harassment and any other behavior creating an unsafe environment are forbidden



SCHOOL REWARD OPPORTUNITIES

At Memphis Merit Academy students have the opportunity to earn rewards for demonstrating excellent behavior, academic growth, and good citizenship. We also have an end of the year awards ceremony to celebrate scholars and families for various achievements attained throughout the year, including perfect attendance, high honor roll, honor roll, and core value awards.

DAILY PRAISE/STICKERS/NOTES Teachers will recognize students who follow the code of conduct and STAR behaviors by giving praise and sometimes providing students with stickers or notes.

COMMUNITY SHOUT OUTS Teachers will recognize students who have shown growth or improvement, done well on an activity, project, or assignment.

BEHAVIOR CHART Every day a student has the opportunity to earn a star on their weekly behavior chart. Students can earn a star by demonstrating on task behaviors throughout the day. Any student who has earned five stars for the week may go into the Treasure Chest and select a surprise treasure to keep.

SCHOLARS OF THE MONTH/SCHOLARS OF THE YEAR Each month, we recognize all scholars that have met the requirements for Scholar of the Month. We acknowledge their hard work with a school-wide recognition ceremony and a monthly certificate.

Criteria to earn Scholar of the Month:

- Excellent Attendance (may have 1 excused absence; may not have more than 2 tardies or early dismissals)
- 100% Days of Scholarly Behavior (Green or Orange according to Daily Behavior Chart)
- 90% Lifework Completion

Scholars who earn Scholar of the Month every month in the school year will be awarded with the honor of Scholar of the Year.

LIFEWORk LEADERS

At the end of the month, any student who has completed Lifework (homework) assignments to the Memphis Merit standard for every single day of the month will be able to participate in a lifework celebration and receive a small treat.

INCENTIVES Memphis Merit provides many exciting activities for scholars to participate in, including Identity Days, SWAG days, and guest speakers. These activities are open for the participation of all scholars, and there are no criteria to participate. There are also monthly extracurricular activities, including field trips, that are incentive-based and require scholars to meet criteria expectations for lifework completion, daily, on-time attendance, and behavior. These extracurricular activities are used to reward scholars for their hard work and compliance to the expectations and policies we have at Memphis Merit. We provide the criteria window (usually a two-week timeframe) and expectations for the upcoming incentive to families in advance every month.

Parents will be notified of the criteria before the window starts. Parents will also receive a notification regarding whether their child may or may not participate once the window closes. Should your child not earn an extracurricular activity, and it is scheduled while school is in session, the scholar will still be required to be in school, as school activities will still be taking place. Failure to come to school will result in the loss of the privilege to attend the next extracurricular activity.

SCHOOL SAFETY There are a number of basic procedures the school has in order to ensure the safety and security of its students and staff. Cooperation on everyone's part will go a long way in guaranteeing that the business of the school – teaching and learning – can take place.



CLOSED CAMPUS Under no circumstances are students to leave the school building without permission. A student with permission to leave may only leave under the escort and supervision of an authorized adult. Students need to be aware that the school has several neighbors and should be respectful and courteous of their needs. Once students have entered the school in the morning, they may not leave the building unless they are escorted by a school staff member or other authorized adult.

SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

Memphis Merit Academy may take reasonable action against a student and/or parent/guardian for failure to follow school policies and procedures that may risk the safety and security of students, staff and school community, including dismissal from Memphis Merit Academy. Please refer to Memphis Merit Academy's Code of Conduct.

SCHOOL SEARCHES

In order to maintain the security of all students, Memphis Merit reserves the right to conduct searches of its students and their property. Memphis Merit authorizes the Head of School and the Head of School's designee(s) to conduct searches of students and their belongings if the authorized school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will result in evidence that the student violated the law or any of Memphis Merit's rules. In authorizing searches, Memphis Merit acknowledges both state and federal constitutional rights which are applicable to personal searches of students and searches of their possessions. An authorized school official may search a student or the student's belongings based upon information received from a reliable informant. Individuals, other than Memphis Merit's employees, will be considered reliable informants if they have previously supplied information that was accurate and verified, they make an admission against their own interest, they provide the same information that is received independently from other sources, or they appear to be credible and the information they are communicating relates to an immediate threat to safety. Memphis Merit employees will be considered reliable informants unless they are known to have previously supplied information that they knew was not accurate. Students may be subject to personal searches and searches of their possessions where reasonable individualized suspicion exists to conduct such a search. Reasonable individualized suspicion to conduct a search of a student or a student's possessions and the scope of the particular search shall be based upon, among other things, the student's age, the prevalence and seriousness of the problem to which the search is directed, the urgency necessitating an immediate search, and the probative value and reliability of the information used as justification for the search. Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy rights in school lockers, cubbies, desks, or other school storage places. Memphis Merit exercises overriding control over such school property, which may be opened and subjected to inspection at any time by school officials. Memphis Merit will provide notification to parents/families if a search has taken place as soon as is practicably reasonable.

VISITOR POLICY

All visitors are required to report to the Front Desk upon entering the building and sign-in with the Office Manager. Visitors must wear a visitor badge on a school lanyard around their necks at all times. Any visitor, including a parent/guardian, who does not report to the office or is found in the building without authorization will be asked first to sign-in and second, if not compliant, to leave immediately.

SAFETY DRILL Any time the students receive a signal for safety drills, including during regularly scheduled drills, students must listen carefully and follow adult directions. Memphis Merit conducts regular practice drills to ensure students and staff are well prepared to respond in the event of a real emergency.

UNIFORM POLICY

Memphis Merit Academy requires all students to wear a uniform in grades K-8th. The uniform guidelines are outlined here. We show respect for our appearance and our cohesion as a community through our uniforms. Students in our community are expected to follow the school dress code in order to be allowed in class. ***Reminder: If a student comes to school without the correct uniform, a phone call will be made home requesting the correct uniform be brought to***



the school immediately. The child will not be permitted to go to class until the correct uniform has arrived. The monogrammed polo shirt component of the uniform must be purchased from our uniform vendor. *There are NO substitutions allowed.* Neither girls nor boys may wear makeup, body art, or temporary tattoos. Scholars may wear nail polish, but it should be removed if it becomes a distraction. Earrings must be the size of a dime or smaller. Earrings, rings, watches, and/or bracelets may be removed if they become a distraction. Students may wear one chain or necklace, but it must be under the uniform. **All shirts must be tucked in.** If a student shows up without the correct uniform, the following consequences will occur:

- **First infraction** – Uniform Reminder Notice sent home.
- **Second Infraction** – Phone conference to discuss plan to correct uniform violation.

Whenever any element of physical appearance or grooming—even if it is allowable under the school’s current rules—becomes a distraction to one’s self or to others, it is no longer acceptable and steps will be taken to remove the distraction. Excessive uniform infractions will result in a written uniform plan from the Dean of Scholars and possible loss of privileges for the scholar. Parents should write the scholar’s name in permanent marker on the tags of all clothing. Since every scholar wears the same clothing, mark your tags clearly. Memphis Merit Academy

Lost and Found clothing will be collected at the school for a short period of time. If a scholar loses an item, parents are encouraged to visit the school to check the lost and found. Memphis Merit will not be held responsible for any lost or missing items. Any items remaining at the school for a period of time will be donated. The uniform requirements are different for lower elementary (K-2) and upper elementary (3-4), which are outlined below.

Uniform Item	Girls	Boys
Shirt	Burgundy or White polo shirt with Memphis Merit logo tucked in at all times A solid white, navy, gray, or black short or long-sleeved undershirt may be worn under the uniform shirt. Undershirts must be tucked in.	Burgundy or white polo shirt with Memphis Merit logo tucked in at all times A solid white, navy, gray, or black short or long-sleeved undershirt may be worn under the uniform shirt. Undershirts must be tucked in.
Bottom	Black pants, Black Jumper dress, or Black skirt	Black pants
Shoes	Closed-toe shoes; Sneakers: Solid black, low top sneakers without any embellishments of any kind. No boots, no sandals, no moccasins, no clogs, no bowling shoes, no shoes with stripes, no multi-colored or two-toned shoes. The shoe policy is the same in the winter months. Students must have on sneakers or shoes. If they wear boots to school, they must change into the proper footwear before breakfast. Shoes: Solid black shoes with a soft rubber sole.	Closed-toe shoes Sneakers: Solid black, low top sneakers without any embellishments of any kind. No boots, no sandals, no moccasins, no clogs, no bowling shoes, no shoes with stripes, no multi-colored or two-toned shoes. The shoe policy is the same in the winter months. Students must have on sneakers or shoes. If they wear boots to school, they must change into the proper footwear before breakfast. Shoes: Solid black shoes with a soft rubber sole.
Socks Outerwear	Black or white socks-no athletic shoes Cardigan with Memphis Merit logo; all other outerwear will be removed upon entrance and stored	Black or white socks-no athletic shoes Cardigan with Memphis Merit logo; all other outerwear will be removed upon entrance and stored
Accessories Friday Attire	Small stud earrings only; 1 watch or bracelet may be worn Memphis Merit school t-shirt, black pants or skirt, black closed-toe shoes, black or white socks, optional Memphis Merit cardigan	Small stud earrings only; 1 watch or bracelet may be worn Memphis Merit school t-shirt, black pants, black dress shoe, black--or-white socks, Memphis Merit cardigan

In the event a child comes to school out of uniform, the family will be notified by phone to bring the missing item and on the behavior log about the uniform violation.



Backpacks: All scholars must bring their backpack to school for their Lifework and other assignments. Bags with wheels are not permitted.

Extra Clothing:

- Parents of Kindergarten and First Grade students and older students with a record of bathroom accidents are required to send an extra pair of pants, extra underwear, and an extra pair of socks to school, and the extra clothes will be kept in the child's cubby at school. Accidents sometimes occur during our long school-day, even for students who do not normally have accidents, and your child can quickly and easily change clothes only if the family has provided a change of clothes in their child's backpack.
- In the event that the child must change into the extra set of clothes, a clean set of clothing must be sent the next day.
- If the child is prone to accidents, we recommend keeping more than one change of clothing at school.
- Spare clothes do not need to be uniform clothing; however, do not send name-brand clothes. Additionally, please consider donating your child's used uniform pieces when he or she outgrows them; this ensures that we have sufficient extra uniform pieces at school and will enable us to provide recycled uniforms at a lower cost to some families.

PURCHASE UNIFORMS

We want to keep school clothing costs as low as possible. **Memphis Merit monogrammed polo shirts and cardigans must be purchased from our MMA School Store** located on our website: <https://championschooluniforms.com> The other components of the uniform are available at local stores such as Walmart, Old Navy, and Target

SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST



Memphis Merit Academy Charter School

A new K-8 charter school for the students of Memphis

KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST

The easiest way to manage supplies in primary classrooms without disrupting classroom time or having unprepared scholars is to have shared supplies within the classrooms. Given the community use of supplies, please note that all supplies received cannot be returned under any circumstance. While Memphis Merit Academy will always provide scholars with the materials necessary to complete their work, we ask families to provide scholars with the following supplies for the year:

- ☐ 60 plain yellow #2 pencils
- ☐ 1 large pink eraser
- ☐ 1 pack of cap erasers
- ☐ Plastic folders with brads (2 Red, 2 Yellow, 2 Blue, 2 Green, & 2 Black)
- ☐ 4 boxes of Kleenex
- ☐ 4 boxes of crayola crayons (at least 24 count)
- ☐ Yellow highlighters (5)
- ☐ 2 boxes of large Crayola Markers
- ☐ 4 elmer's glue sticks
- ☐ 1 pencil box
- ☐ Clear pencil pouch
- ☐ 1 pair of Fiskar Blunt tip scissors (kids-no longer than 6 inches)
- ☐ box of storage bags, with zipper (Girls-quart and Boys-gallon)
- ☐ Earbuds
- ☐ ream of white copy paper
- ☐ ream of color copy paper (any color)
- ☐ 2- 4 packs black EXPO dry erase markers
- ☐ 2-4 packs multicolor EXPO dry erase markers
- ☐ large Clorox disinfecting wipes (any brand)
- ☐ 2-wide ruled spiral notebooks (at least 70 pages)
- ☐ 1st-2nd 2 Composition Books
- ☐ 1 Black Sharpie
- ☐ 1 change of clothing appropriate for current season (top, bottom, undergarments, socks, labeled with child's name inside of a gallon ziplock bag)

Girls

1 box of Band-aids

Boys

1 bottle of hand sanitizer

Parents may drop off supplies on the first day of school during arrival. Supplies may also be dropped off prior to the start of school during July.



Memphis Merit Academy Charter School

A new K-8 charter school for the students of Memphis

FIRST GRADE SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST

The easiest way to manage supplies in primary classrooms without disrupting classroom time or having unprepared scholars is to have shared supplies within the classrooms. Given the community use of supplies, please note that all supplies received cannot be returned under any circumstance. While Memphis Merit Academy will always provide scholars with the materials necessary to complete their work, we ask families to provide scholars with the following supplies for the year:

- ☐ 60 plain yellow #2 pencils
- ☐ 1 large pink eraser
- ☐ 1 pack of cap erasers
- ☐ Plastic folders with brads (2 Red, 2 Yellow, 2 Blue, 2 Green, & 2 Black)
- ☐ 4 boxes of Kleenex
- ☐ 4 boxes of crayola crayons (at least 24 count)
- ☐ Yellow highlighters (5)
- ☐ 2 boxes of large Crayola Markers
- ☐ 4 elmer's glue sticks
- ☐ 1 pencil box
- ☐ Clear pencil pouch
- ☐ 1 pair of Fiskar Blunt tip scissors (kids-no longer than 6 inches)
- ☐ box of storage bags, with zipper (Girls-quart and Boys-gallon)
- ☐ Earbuds
- ☐ ream of white copy paper
- ☐ ream of color copy paper (any color)
- ☐ 2- 4 packs black EXPO dry erase markers
- ☐ 2-4 packs multicolor EXPO dry erase markers
- ☐ large Clorox disinfecting wipes (any brand)
- ☐ 2-wide ruled spiral notebooks (at least 70 pages)
- ☐ 1st-2nd 2 Composition Books
- ☐ 1 Black Sharpie
- ☐ 1 change of clothing appropriate for current season (top, bottom, undergarments, socks, labeled with child's name inside of a gallon ziplock bag)

Girls

1 pack of baby Wipes

Boys

1 box of Band-aids

Parents may drop off supplies on the first day of school during arrival. Supplies may also be dropped off prior to the start of school during July.



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SECOND GRADE SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST

The easiest way to manage supplies in primary classrooms without disrupting classroom time or having unprepared scholars is to have shared supplies within the classrooms. Given the community use of supplies, please note that all supplies received cannot be returned under any circumstance. While Memphis Merit Academy will always provide scholars with the materials necessary to complete their work, we ask families to provide scholars with the following supplies for the year:

- ☐ 60 plain yellow #2 pencils
- ☐ 1 large pink eraser
- ☐ 1 pack of cap erasers
- ☐ ½ inch white w/ clear cover
- ☐ Plastic folders with brads (2 Red, 2 Yellow, 2 Blue, 2 Green, & 2 Black)
- ☐ 4 boxes of Kleenex
- ☐ 2 boxes of crayola crayons (at least 24 count)
- ☐ Yellow highlighters (4)
- ☐ 2 boxes of large Crayola Markers
- ☐ 4 elmer's glue sticks
- ☐ 1 pencil box
- ☐ Clear pencil pouch 3 ring binder
- ☐ 2 pair of Fiskar Blunt tip scissors (kids-no longer than 6 inches)
- ☐ box of storage bags, with zipper (Girls-quart and Boys-gallon)
- ☐ Earbuds
- ☐ ream of white copy paper
- ☐ ream of color copy paper (any color)
- ☐ 2- 4 packs black EXPO dry erase markers
- ☐ 2-4 packs multicolor EXPO dry erase markers
- ☐ 2 large Clorox disinfecting wipes (any brand)
- ☐ 2-wide ruled spiral notebooks (at least 70 pages)
- ☐ 1st-2nd 2 Composition Books
- ☐ 2 Black Sharpie
- ☐ Plastic Ruler
- ☐ 1 clipboard

Girls

1 pack of baby Wipes

Boys

1 box of Band-aids

Parents may drop off supplies on the first day of school during arrival. Supplies may also be dropped off prior to the start of school during July.



Memphis Merit Academy Charter School

A new K-8 charter school for the students of Memphis

Third, Fourth, & Fifth Grade School Supply List

The easiest way to manage supplies in classrooms without disrupting classroom time or having unprepared scholars is to have shared supplies within the classrooms. Given the community use of supplies, please note that all supplies received cannot be returned under any circumstance. While Memphis Merit Academy will always provide scholars with the materials necessary to complete their work, we ask families to provide scholars with the following supplies for the year:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 60 plain yellow #2 pencils | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-10 Pack of sheet protectors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 plastic ruler | <input type="checkbox"/> 1- pack of Crayola Markers (10 count) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pack of cap erasers | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 protractor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Ultra Fine Sharpie | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 packs black expo markers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 boxes Crayola Colored pencils (12 count) | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 pack multicolor expo markers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 boxes of Crayola Crayons (24 count) | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 black and white composition book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-8 count watercolor set | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 boxes of Kleenex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 highlighters (Yellow, Pink, Orange, Green and Blue) | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Large Clorox disinfecting wipes (any brand) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 zipper pencil pouch | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 wide ruled spiral notebooks (at least 70 pages) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Elmer's glue sticks | <input type="checkbox"/> Plain colored pocket folders with prongs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 pair of Fiskar Blunt tip scissors (kids- no longer than 6 inches) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 blue, 1 yellow, 1 orange, 1 green, 1 red |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earbuds | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 change of clothing appropriate for current season (top, bottom, undergarments, socks, labeled with child's name inside of a gallon ziplock bag) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 package of color copy paper | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 packs of index cards | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 packs of wide ruled lined paper | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1- 2 inch 3-ring binder w/ clear pocket on front | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 packs of 6 dividers w/ pockets | |

Girls

- 1 Pack of baby wipes
- 1 Roll of paper towels
- 1 Quart ziploc Bags

Boys

- 1 Box of Band aids
- 1 Roll of paper towels
- 1 Gallon Ziploc Bags

Parents may drop off supplies on the first day of school during arrival. Supplies may also be dropped off prior to the start of school during the month of July.



FAMILY INVOLVEMENT Memphis Merit is an academically challenging, disciplined, and joyful elementary school in which all members of the school community – board members, leaders, teachers, families and scholars – understand and are driven by the mission of the college. We believe in the importance of working together to make a positive impact in the academic and character growth and development of every child. Although the responsibility of making decisions of school policy belongs to the Board of Directors and Head of School, family involvement is not only welcomed, but absolutely critical to the success of the school. Families are involved on an individual level and through organized parent groups. We recognize that an effective partnership between school and home sets each scholar up for success by garnering family support of our school and reinforcement in the home for the school's activities and expectations.

Family involvement in a child's educational life is critical to a child's success. We encourage families to develop strong positive partnerships with the school.

Memphis Merit Academy Families Are Asked To:

- Establish a daily routine for your child.
- Provide a quiet space for your child to study.
- Provide positive reinforcement of student progress and success.
- Provide a library of books or frequent trips to the library and/or bookstores.
- Discuss academics and student work among family members.
- Help your child take responsibility for his/her actions. Stress the importance of telling the truth. Remind your child that no one is perfect, and everyone makes mistakes.
- Check with your child's teacher for actual facts regarding a problem.
- Chaperone field trips and volunteer at the school.
- Support other Memphis Merit families.

Memphis Merit Families Are Required To:

- Attend an orientation session with the Head of School to review the family handbook.
- Reinforce Memphis Merit's Code of Conduct and STAR Behavior at home.
- Attend 2 mandatory workshops called University Nights that will focus on math and/or literacy.
- Read to or with your child for at least 20 minutes every day, including weekends, and sign the reading log.
- Make sure your child completes the nightly Lifework, and sign the logs.
- Attend mandatory Achievement Conferences to pick up your child's report card each semester and meet with your child's teacher at the scheduled date and time.
- Volunteer at school for the necessary hours required.
- Actively participate in at least 2 school-wide fundraisers.
- Donate school supplies for your child's class per the requested schedule.
- Effectively communicate with your child's teacher by responding to letters or phone calls within 24 hours of receiving a letter or phone call.

VISITING CLASSES The school is able to accommodate visitors given prior approval from school leaders. Our school has an open door policy that allows family members to sit in on class during any time **AFTER the first few weeks of school**. During the beginning of school, it is critical for students to transition into their new setting, and the presence of families in the classroom can slow this process. After the initial four weeks of school, we encourage families to come into the classroom and see our dedicated teachers and students at work. Anyone, including parents, who wish to visit our school, must first call the office to set up an appointment. It is up to the school leaders to grant or refuse a school visit. Visitors need to sign in at the office before visiting a classroom and wear a visitor sticker while in the school. When observing in the classroom, families are asked not to disrupt the education of their child or of other children or to attempt to conduct individual conversations with the teacher during instructional time. Talking on the phone, taking pictures, or holding personal conversations throughout the school is prohibited, as it is disruptive to student learning. Family members who are disruptive to the educational process will be asked to leave.



TEACHER MESSAGES Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's teacher through their personal number (based on teacher's discretion) or the school's number. Messages may be left for teachers with the Office Manager. Please leave your name and your child's name, a phone number and time you may be reached, and a brief message regarding the reason for the call. Teachers will return your call within 24 hours. If after 24 hours a teacher has not responded to your message, please contact the Head of School. Please remember that messages may not be received until after the instructional day ends. Please do not call teachers after 9:00 pm.

MEETING WITH A TEACHER If you need to meet with a teacher, please make an appointment. An appointment can be made by calling the school and speaking with the Office Manager. Parents should not expect to meet with a teacher without a prior appointment. Whenever possible, appointments should not take place during the instructional day. They will need to take place before 7:45 AM or after 4:15 PM.

MEETING WITH A SCHOOL LEADER If you need to meet with the Head of School, Dean of Operations, Student Support Coordinator, please call the Office Manager and schedule an appointment.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION

It is vitally important that Memphis Merit Academy have methods of contacting parents or other family members at all times. This is of critical importance in case of emergency, illness, or behavior requiring immediate family contact. Parents should notify the office of moves, changes of home or emergency telephone numbers, address and/or places of employment as soon as possible. In case of an emergency, parents or guardians should contact the Front Desk (Office Manager) either by phone or in person. Under no circumstances should parents or guardians contact students in their classrooms or attempt to withdraw students from the building without notifying and receiving permission from staff members at the Front Desk.

ORIENTATION SESSIONS During Spring, orientation sessions led by the Head of School are scheduled with small groups of parents to discuss the policies, procedures, and expectations of Memphis Merit Academy. The Head of School will explain vital information about class rules and discipline systems, class specific policies, give an overview of the general daily schedule, and answer any general questions that parents have about the classroom and school. All parents are required to attend an orientation session and must bring their children for initial assessments. It will also be an opportunity for parents to meet other parents within the school.

UNIVERSITY NIGHTS We are excited about our college preparatory curriculum and instructional methods and want to share what is going on in our classrooms. Throughout the year, we will hold parent university nights. Families must attend at least two university nights throughout the school year. We will send out a calendar at the start of the year that has all of the dates for these sessions in order to plan accordingly.

CONSTANT COMMUNICATION Scholar achievement data and behavior progress are communicated with families throughout the school year. Families receive reports that outline: (1) their child's academic proficiency regarding prioritized standards in every subject, (2) the targeted intervention the school will provide in the coming weeks to maximize academic progress, and (3) tangible supports to be provided by the family at home.

FAMILY MERIT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Memphis Merit Academy will form a Family Merit Advisory Council consisting of the Head of School, at least one teacher, and at least 1 parent. The Family Merit Advisory Council will convene at a minimum of once per quarter, or as often as once per month. The primary purpose of the council is to engage families of the school, create opportunities for parents and families to be involved at the school, launch annual listening campaigns where the council actively seeks the input and parents and families, and find ways to support and encourage the teachers in school. At minimum, we ask all families to commit to the following:

- Review annually, sign, and abide by our School-Parent-Student contract
- Share concerns with school staff and support school decisions and policies;



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- Support students at home in completing lifework, reading assignments, and any other related school assignments;
- Actively communicate with students regarding academic and behavioral progress and communicate with school about concerns;
- Participate and attend Parent Orientation, Student Orientation, University Night, parent conferences, and return phone calls from the school
- Attend all requested family meetings, family conferences, and return phone calls from school. ● Communicate student needs and changes in behavior for the school to effectively partner in monitoring student development;
- These meetings are called 'Family MERIT Council' and provide the opportunity for us to organize families around issues and efforts that promote our mission, update them around our progress, and solicit their feedback and suggestions, as well as address any concerns they may have.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES Parent Teacher Conferences are a crucial component of our educational program. A parent or guardian must attend every conference where the report card is distributed and student progress is discussed with the classroom teachers. Parents should plan on attending a 20-minute conference during the designated conference day or at a pre-arranged time before or after school during that week.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES Families are invited to host and give tours to school visitors, assist classroom teachers with various needs, serve as chaperones for school field trips, and participate in planning sessions for school activities that support the school's mission. Please reach out to the school or your child's teacher to arrange any volunteering opportunities.

WHAT HAPPENS IF...

- **You move during the school year?** Please contact the main office and ask to speak to the school's Operations Manager. We will update your new address in order for your child to receive a new transportation assignment. ● **Transportation Accommodations:** When applicable, special transportation service for students with disabilities is stated in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan.
- **Loss of Transportation Privilege:** We consider the school bus to be an extension of the classroom. That means that we have the same standards of behavior on the school bus. Students who violate the discipline code while on the bus may be disciplined and may be denied transportation, either for the remainder of the year or for a temporary suspension.

LATE PICKUP CHARGES

Memphis Merit does provide after school child-care services. All scholars must be picked up by 3:45pm Monday through Thursday, and by 1:30 pm on Friday. Failure to pick up scholar(s) from the school, will result in a late charge of \$1.00 per minute per scholar from the time of dismissal (3:45pm on Monday – Thursday and 1:30pm on Friday). If a family has more than one scholar, each child will accrue individual fees.

DISMISSAL TAGS

Dismissal tags are an important part of our process in ensuring all students get home safely. You must display your dismissal tag in your car for car dismissal to retrieve your child. Please review the information below to ensure you are fully aware of the process.

- Each family receives 2 dismissal tags at the start of the school year or upon enrollment for free. These tags should be preserved for the entire school year.
- Duplicating dismissal tags is strictly prohibited. All unauthorized duplications will not be valid for pick up (this includes electronic versions).
- If dismissal a dismissal tag is needed, new tags must be requested through the front office in the following manner:



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- Must complete a dismissal tag reinstatement form request at the front office
- Payment of \$3.00 must be received before the reprint can take place
- Parents can pick up reprinted dismissal tag at the front office 48 hours after the request is made

Please Note: Families are able to present a photo ID for pick up on the rare case that they are unable to bring their dismissal tag for pick up. However, the use of photo ID cannot become a continuous pattern. Presenting a photo ID slows down the process for dismissal and, therefore, cannot be accepted more than 2 times per week. In the event that this will need to occur more than 2 times per week, the parent will be expected to purchase a dismissal tag per the dismissal expectations.

PARKING AT MEMPHIS MERIT At the beginning of each school year, Memphis Merit provides specific parking information. This information is also always available in the front office throughout the year. Please adhere strictly to our parking directions.

Morning Arrival Parking: During morning arrival, families may park in the first three rows next to Memphis Merit on and walk their scholar to the arrival doors. This is the only place allotted for morning arrival parking. If you attempt to park and drop your scholar off in other areas around the school, you will be directed to the space allotted or to utilize the arrival line.

Event Parking: When you come to attend events at Memphis Merit, you will be notified of where you can park for the event on the notification you receive. Surrounding businesses utilize their parking for their employees and customers. Please adhere to the parking provided on the notification because if you do not, your vehicle could be towed away by who owns the property.

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

Memphis Merit Academy Charter School
4775 American Way, Memphis, TN 38118
Tel: 901-617-3690 Fax: 901-617-3691
www.memphismeritacademy.org

SCHOOL DAY The regular school day runs from 7:45 am– 3:45 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. On Fridays, students are dismissed at 1:30pm. The school building is closed at 5:45pm. Voice mail will be on automated attendant before 7:30am and after 5:30pm.

PHONE USE Although Memphis Merit aims to have as much communication as possible with families, it would take an incredible amount of staffing and resources to provide message services, and we cannot guarantee that messages will actually reach students or teachers during the day. Teachers will receive messages after 4:00pm.

The office phone is a business phone and should be used by students for emergencies only. If it is an emergency, please call the main office number and leave a message with the Office Manager. Students are prohibited from using school phones, and students are not permitted to have cell phones at school. The phones may not be used by students to arrange for delivery of any items, including signed progress reports, signed report cards, or missing homework assignments. Students will not be called from class to the office to speak with a parent except in case of an emergency or medical reasons.

VISITORS Memphis Merit is happy to have visitors. We request that anyone, including family members who wish to visit the school, first call the office to set up an appointment. Our Office Manager will make every attempt to arrange the visit within 24 hours of the request. All visitors must sign in at the office and wear a visitor badge.



MEDIA All media for Memphis Merit will be handled by the Head of School. A release form will be sent home at the start of the school year for guardians to sign to either authorize or deny the use of pictures or videos that contain their child.

LOST AND STOLEN PROPERTY We strongly encourage families to ensure that children do not bring valuable objects to school. Any items that students bring to school that may cause disruption will be confiscated at the school. We make every reasonable effort to return all personal property to the appropriate parent; however, the school is not responsible for replacing lost or stolen property or compensating the family for the value of that property.

STUDENT INTERNET AND COMPUTER USE The Memphis Merit Academy computer network is provided for students to conduct research, complete assignments, and communicate with others. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Parent permission is required. Access is a privilege—not a right. Access entails responsibility. Students are responsible for good behavior using any and all technology, just as they are in a classroom or school hallway. Computer network storage (hard drives and personal folders) may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators and teachers may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly.

The following misuses of the computer system are not permitted:

- Sending and/or displaying hateful or pornographic messages or pictures
- Using abusive, threatening or inappropriate language
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Engaging in or promoting violence
- Engaging in racial, gender, or other slurs
- Receiving or transmitting information pertaining to weapons, such as bombs, automatic weapons, illicit firearms or explosive devices
- Damaging technology equipment (computer systems, computer networks, TVs, VCRs, digital cameras, scanners, etc.)
- Violating copyright laws (copying internet or other materials without permission)
- Using others' passwords
- Trespassing in other students and/or teachers' folders, work, or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Employing the computer network for commercial purposes
- Transmitting personal information without written parental consent
- Accessing areas considered borderline without written parental consent
- Hacking (attempt to gain unauthorized access to files, folders, and/or other systems)

All student internet usage is monitored and managed with our electronic monitoring systems. Violations will result in loss of computer use as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

WEAPONS

Weapons (firearms, knives, etc.) are not permitted on Memphis Merit Academy premises nor at off-site school sanctioned events.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES Students should not have electronic devices in school. Electronic devices include games (Nintendo Switch, etc.), CD-players, and portable stereos (iPods), and cell phones. None of these devices are needed and often represent a distraction from successful academics and a serious atmosphere. In addition, these are items that cause conflict and lead to grief when lost or stolen. While Memphis Merit obviously strives to prevent theft of any item, the school will not attempt to locate any electronic devices that are not permitted at school. In the event that a student disobeys this rule and is seen with an electronic device or uses a prohibited electronic device in school, a staff



member will confiscate it. It will be returned only after a parent/guardian has come to school to pick it up. Repeated violations of this policy may result in indefinite confiscation irrespective of any costs or fees students and/or their families may incur as a result.

MANDATED REPORTER POLICY

According to TCA 37-1-403(i)(1), all school personnel are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect. Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately when they have reason to believe that harm has come to a child that “reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse or neglect.” Under this law, failure to report such abuse is a Class A Misdemeanor.

Once any staff member becomes aware that a student may be the victim of abuse or neglect, they must:

- Call the DCS central intake hotline at (877) 54-ABUSE (552-2873)
- Notify the Head of School
- Complete a Memphis Merit incident report.

When calling the hotline, the staff member must have the following information (or as much as is known): the name, birth date, and address of the alleged victim; the name, address, age or birth date, and relationship of the alleged perpetrator; what type of injury or harm was allegedly done to the victim; and a description of the incident (time/date, place in which it occurred, and indication of intention to harm). The staff member should also have the names and ages of other children in the household, information as to whether or not English is fluently spoken by the parents and the work phone number of the alleged perpetrator.

While these steps are taking place, Head of School will assist both the faculty member and student in understanding the ramifications of the call. The Head of School will debrief the student and when appropriate, will contact the parent(s)/guardian.

No one in the workplace, even a supervisor, is permitted to suppress, change, or edit a report of abuse. A mandated reporter who willfully fails to report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect is subject to license suspension or revocation and commits a misdemeanor. Falsely reporting information to the hotline is also a misdemeanor.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS Students are permitted to bring store-bought goodies to be shared with classmates if the teacher is notified in advance. You can notify the Office Manager by writing a note or leaving a message. The treats must already be prepared in individual servings. Treats can be shared during LUNCH TIME only on Mondays - Thursdays. Parents must arrive earlier than 11:15 a.m. to set up. Given an early dismissal schedule on Fridays, birthday celebrations are not allowed on Fridays. Memphis Merit Academy student birthday treats should be easy and quick to serve. Parents must provide plates, napkins, and utensils as necessary – Memphis Merit will not provide these items. Cakes should be cut beforehand; the school does not stock cake knives. If you choose to bring ice cream, please bring individually wrapped ice cream treats. Helium balloons are not permitted since these often become stuck on the ceiling. Individual goodie bags are permitted as long as every student in the scholar's class receives one. Parents are not required to send birthday treats to school. Invitations for individual birthday parties are not to be distributed in class. **Note, if your child does not celebrate birthdays, or if they are not permitted to celebrate birthdays, please send a note in writing informing us that your child is not to participate in birthday celebrations.** This note will be held in their file.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST & LUNCH

Memphis Merit currently participates in the Shelby County Schools Nutrition Program. This child nutrition program provides all students with meals free of charge. As a school, Memphis Merit is required to requalify for this program each year to ensure eligibility. For the 2019-2020 school year, Memphis Merit is still determining eligibility for free meals for all students and will provide updates accordingly. Families may send lunch or breakfast from home. Students will not have access to a microwave to heat any lunches. Soda and candy are never permitted at school, even in



lunches brought from home.

FOOD

All Memphis Merit students are provided with breakfast (if they arrive on time), snack, and lunch. At the start of each month a lunch menu will be sent home. If a student does not like a particular meal, they may bring in their own lunch. However, they are not permitted to bring in foods that are unhealthy or high in sugar. **Foods that are not permitted include: candy, soda, juices that are not 100% juice, energy drinks, donuts, cupcakes, chips, candy bars, etc.** Memphis Merit does not provide food substitutions for students. If a student does not like a particular item, please check the menu and send a bag lunch on the corresponding days.

Memphis Merit serves milk at breakfast and lunch. It is very important for all children to drink milk to grow healthy teeth and bones. Parents are required to notify the school of any food allergies and provide documentation from a doctor for the student's health file. Parents should also notify the school of any other food restrictions due to religion or custom. Please note that Memphis Merit has a no gum policy. Students are not permitted to bring in or chew gum at any time while they are on the premises.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROCEDURES Students must arrive by approximately 7:40 a.m. to eat breakfast. When students enter the room they must place their Lifework folder in the bin, put away their belongings, and proceed quietly to their seat. Once they are seated they may begin to eat their breakfast. Students must remain seated during breakfast. After students have finished they may work on their Brightwork activities. Students are required to clean and wipe up their tables after breakfast. Students who do not follow the rules for the morning breakfast procedures will lose morning privileges and may lose Choice Time privileges. The scholars are very active in their learning; therefore, lunch at Memphis Merit is silent because it provides a calm space to unwind and eat their food. Students must remain quiet and seated during lunch. School lunchtime can often be a chaotic and stressful environment, but at Memphis Merit, we preserve this time to allow scholars to listen to classical music and engage in a peaceful space.

HEALTHY SNACK POLICY Because we want to ensure that our students are healthy, we have a healthy snack policy. Students have a morning snack, and students should bring a snack from home. Your child's teacher will send home a snack calendar for the class. Students do need to bring a snack from home, but if they do bring a snack from home, it needs to be healthy. Examples of healthy snacks include fruit bar, granola bars, celery, carrots, strawberries, grapes, apples, and 100% fruit, dried fruit snacks.

FOOD ALLERGIES The school will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate students with food allergies. Parents are required to inform the school of all food allergies and their severity. If a parent wants to provide classroom snacks and lunch for his or her own child, these snacks can be kept in the classroom in a separate snack closet or cubby area. Sharing or trading of food is prohibited for all students.

HEALTH POLICIES

HEALTH DOCUMENTATION Health and safety are a top priority at Memphis Merit. Before a student can enroll in the school, the school must have on file the following forms:

- Medical Notification Form. This form provides important information about a scholar's current health concerns and indicates what medication needs may be required during school hours. It also contains emergency contact name and number(s).
- Authorization to Dispense Medication Form. If a student requires medication while in school, the school must have on file an Authorization to Dispense Medication form, filled out by the student's physician. No student is allowed to bring medication to the school without the school's full knowledge. Students who have provided the school with medication dispensation authorization forms should bring the medication (other than Tylenol and ibuprofen, which the school will stock in the main office) to the school on the first day or contact the school to make other arrangements. All medication must be presented in its original container from the pharmacy and must be brought in by a parent or accompanied by a note from the parent.



The medication dispensation authorization form requirement applies to all medication, including Tylenol and ibuprofen. If a student needs to take Tylenol or ibuprofen during the school day, the student must have on file the authorization signed by his or her physician and a parent or guardian, giving the school permission to administer the medication during the school year. The medication dispensation authorization form requirement also applies to asthma inhalers, which students should keep in their backpacks. If a student needs to use his/her asthma inhaler during the school day, he/she should go to the Director of Operations' office to self-administer the inhaler.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS

If school staff believes that a child needs to see a doctor, is contagious, increases the risk of illness to other children, or requires prolonged individual staff attention that interferes with the safety and regular functioning of the classroom, the school will contact families and ask them to pick up and take their child home.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parents have certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level.

DEFINITION OF STUDENT RECORDS

"Student Records" shall mean any written or recorded information concerning a student by which a student may be individually identified, and which Memphis Merit maintains. They may include, but are not limited to, the following: basic identifying information, academic transcript, attendance records, health records, performance scores on standardized assessments, disciplinary records, and records from previous schools. Recorded information maintained by a staff member for his or her exclusive use, or his or her substitute, shall not be considered a part of the student records.

INSPECTION OF STUDENT RECORDS Parents shall have the right to inspect, challenge and copy student records of that parent's child until one of the following events occurs:

- A. The student attains 21 years of age;
- B. The student attains 18 years of age and declares himself or herself financially independent of his or her parents.
Student records shall be made available to parents and eligible students within fifteen (15) school days of the time a written request for review is submitted to the records custodian.

RIGHT TO CONTROL ACCESS OF STUDENT RECORDS School officials shall release student records to the official records custodian of another school in which the student has enrolled or intends to enroll upon the written request of such official or student, provided that the parent receives prior written notice of the nature and substance of the information to be transferred. Parents may, upon written request, inspect, copy, and challenge such information. Once parents have been notified of their right to inspect, copy, and challenge information to be transferred to another school and the parents do not respond within ten (10) school days, the records shall be forwarded to the requesting school.

ACCESS TO RECORDS WITHOUT PARENT CONSENT School staff members who have a current and legitimate educational interest in the student records shall have access as needed for professional purposes to both the student's permanent and temporary records. School officials shall release student records without parent permission pursuant to a valid court order or subpoena presented by local, state, or federal officials. However, the school officials shall notify the parents in writing regarding the judicial order and the information so provided.

Student records may be made available to researchers for statistical purposes, provided that: a) permission has been received from the State Superintendent of Education; and b) No student or parent shall be personally identified from the information released.

Information may be released without parental consent in connection with an emergency to appropriate persons if the



knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons.

If a student is 18 years of age and the student is financially independent of parents, the student may request the parents be denied access to his or her records. A student who desires to declare himself or herself financially independent of his or her parents shall submit a request in writing to the school's records custodian.

MAINTENANCE OF STUDENT RECORDS Student permanent records and the information contained therein shall be maintained for a period of sixty (60) years after the student has transferred, graduated or permanently withdrawn from school. Student temporary records shall be maintained until August 1 of the year the student transfers, graduates or permanently withdraws from school. The records of special education students shall be maintained for a period of three (3) years. Information maintained by staff members for their exclusive use shall be destroyed by the staff member maintaining the information no later than the student's transfer, graduation or permanent withdrawal from the school. The Head of School shall be responsible for having all student records verified and to eliminate or correct all out of date, misleading, inaccurate, unnecessary, or irrelevant information on all students' files.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Memphis Merit Academy's Board of Directors has the following Grievance Policy as a guide for parents and guardians to solve possible grievance issues in the most effective manner. This policy serves as a guideline, but the Memphis Merit Academy Board of Directors has the final decision in all matters that take place under the direction of its school. The following procedure will be followed whenever a parent/guardian has a grievance:

STEP 1: The parent/guardian is to set an appointment to meet with the teacher or staff member involved in the grievance. The teacher and/or the parent/guardian may request that the Head of School or his/her designee be present.

STEP 2: If the issue is not resolved, the parent/guardian may ask for a meeting with the Head of School. **STEP 3:** If the issue remains unresolved, the parent/guardian is requested to write a letter of grievance addressed to the Board of Directors of Memphis Merit Academy for a final decision. Board will review complaint and issue a response within 30 days of hearing the complaint. If Board does not address the complaint to his or her satisfaction, individual may file a complaint for Shelby County Schools School Board. A parent/guardian may file a complaint with Tennessee Department of Education at any time if he or she believes that the school has violated any federal or state law or regulation.

FAMILY HANDBOOK SIGNATURE



Memphis Merit Academy Charter School
2023-2024 Student Handbook and Student Discipline

I have received and read a copy of Memphis Merit's Family Handbook and understand the rules, regulations, and procedures of the school. I understand that if I ever have any questions regarding school policies, I can always ask a member of the school community for further explanation.

Student Name

Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date