

Merkel Intermediate School

Student Handbook



2009-2010

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PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2009–2010! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

The MIS Student Handbook is designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. In an effort to make it easier to use, the handbook is divided into two sections:

Section I—REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS—with notices that the district must provide to all parents, as well as other information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook; and

Section II—INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS —organized alphabetically by topic for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware that the term “the student’s parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the MERKEL MIS *Student Code of Conduct*, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found [as an attachment to this handbook or as a separate document sent home to parents] and [posted online and available in the principal’s office.]

The student handbook is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect student handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters and other communications.

In case of conflict between board policy or the *Student Code of Conduct* and any provisions of the student handbook, the provisions of board policy or the *Student Code of Conduct* that were most recently adopted by the board are to be followed.

After reading through the entire handbook with your child, keep it as a reference during this school year. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact Mr. Jones.

Also, please complete and return to your child’s campus the following required forms provided in the signature packet accompanying this handbook:

1. Enrollment Form;
2. Lunch Form;
3. Acknowledgement of Student Handbook/Student Code of Conduct;
4. Corporal Punishment;

5. Emergency Information and Permission;
6. Medication Permission (reverse side of Emergency Permission);
7. Acceptable Use of Technology;
8. Student Participation/Distance Learning/Interactive Television;
9. Student Directory Information;
10. Student Residency Questionnaire;
11. Family Survey (English with Spanish version on reverse)
12. Bus Rules/Field Trip Permission;
13. Title I Parent/Student Compact.

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district's policy manual is available for review in the school office or online at www.Merkel.esc14.net.

SECTION I: REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

This section of the MIS Student Handbook includes several notices that the district is required to provide to you, as well as other information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Merkel ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The following district staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of gender: Mr. Hood.
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Mr. Hood.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent Mr. Hood, 928-5813.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Working Together

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. Your involvement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child, if your child is entering ninth grade.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed.
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office at MIS-928-5464 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school.

- Becoming a school volunteer.
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: PTO and PATS
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council, assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA.]
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student’s eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For further information, see policy EF(LEGAL).]

“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

As a parent, you have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for your child’s participation in:

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to

protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA.]

Displaying a Student's Artwork and Projects

The district will seek parental consent before displaying students' artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students and the like on the district's Web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication

Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff

You may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teachers, including whether a teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.

Reviewing Instructional Materials

As a parent, you have a right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.

Inspecting Surveys

As a parent, you may inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.

Notification of Rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the school decides

not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

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

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

Accessing Student Records

You may review your child's student records. These records include:

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,
- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,

- Other medical records,
- Teacher and counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns, and
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child.

Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student

As a parent, you may grant or deny any written request from the district to make a video or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

- When it is to be used for school safety;
- When it relates to classroom instruction or a co-curricular or extracurricular activity; or
- When it relates to media coverage of the school.

Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom

You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.

Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. [See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** policy EC(LEGAL).]

Excusing a Student from Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK(LEGAL).]

Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to his or her child's misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO(LEGAL) and the *Student Code of Conduct*.]

Requesting Transfers for Your Child

As a parent, you have a right:

- To request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the board or its designee to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 25.0341. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. Contact Mr. Hood with any questions. [See policy FDB.]
- To request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDD(LOCAL).]
- To request the transfer of your child to another campus if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether that assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. [See policies FDD(LEGAL) and (LOCAL).]

Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings

As a parent, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets, etc.) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14th day after the enrollment of your children. [See FDB(LEGAL).]

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Parents of Students with Disabilities

Parents of students with learning difficulties or who may need special education services may request an evaluation for special education at any time. For more information, contact Mr. Jones at 928-5464.

Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other support services that are available to all students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of his or her rights if the parent disagrees with the

district. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*.

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is Mr. Jones at 928-5464.

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, the parent or guardian may request that any other student residing in the household be transferred to the same campus, if the appropriate grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus. [See policy FDB(LOCAL).]

Opciones y requisitos para proporcionar ayuda a los estudiantes que tienen dificultades en el aprendizaje o que necesitan o pueden necesitar educación especial

Si un niño está experimentando dificultades en el aprendizaje, el padre puede comunicarse con la persona mencionada más abajo para enterarse sobre el sistema de estudios de diagnóstico y de recomendación de la educación general del distrito para los servicios de apoyo. Este sistema conecta a los estudiantes con una variedad de opciones de apoyo, incluyendo la recomendación para una evaluación para educación especial. Los estudiantes que tienen dificultades en el aula normal deberán ser considerados para tutoría, servicios compensatorios y otros servicios de apoyo disponibles para todos los estudiantes.

En cualquier momento, un padre tiene derecho a solicitar una evaluación para los servicios de educación especial. Dentro de un período de tiempo razonable, el distrito debe decidir si la evaluación es necesaria. Si la evaluación es necesaria, el padre será notificado y se le pedirá que de consentimiento para la evaluación. El distrito debe completar la evaluación y el informe dentro de los 60 días de calendario desde la fecha en que el distrito reciba el consentimiento por escrito. El distrito debe darle una copia del informe al padre.

Si el distrito determina que la evaluación no es necesaria, el distrito proporcionará al padre una notificación por escrito que explica el motivo por el cual el niño no será evaluado. Esta notificación por escrito incluirá información que le explica al padre los derechos que tiene si no está de acuerdo con el distrito. Además, la notificación debe informarle al padre la manera de obtener una copia de la *Notificación de las Salvaguardas del Procedimiento – Derecho de los Padres De Estudiantes con Discapacidades*.

La persona designada con quien puede comunicarse en relación a las opciones que tiene un niño que experimenta dificultades en el aprendizaje o para una recomendación para la evaluación para educación especial es:

Nombre de la persona: Brack Jones, Principal

Numero de teléfono: 325-928-5464, extensión 1300

Services for Title I Participants

Please contact the Intermediate school at 928-5464 for information about participation in the Title I program.

Student Records

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy. Before disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including the parent or the student requesting the information. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older OR who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records, is considered confidential educational records. Release is restricted to:

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights. Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18, is emancipated by a court, or enrolls in a post-secondary institution, control of the records goes to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and under limited circumstances when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.
- District school officials who have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. "Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.
- Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

Release to any other person or agency—such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The principal is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. . The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and

the student qualifies for free or reduced-priced meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The address of the superintendent's office is P.O. Box 430.

The addresses (es) of the principals' offices are:

P.O. Box 430

Merkel, Texas 79536

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the principal. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading policy. [See FINALITY OF GRADES at FNG(LEGAL),

The district's policy regarding student records found at FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) is available from the principal's or superintendent's office.

The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

Please note:

Parents or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with federal law regarding student records. The complaint may be mailed to:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Directory Information

The law permits the district to designate certain personal information about students as "directory information." This "directory information" will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, release of a student's directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year. [See the acknowledgment form included in the signature packet.]

Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes

The district often needs to use student information for the following school-sponsored purposes: [found in your FL(LOCAL)].

Unless you object to the use of your child's information for these limited purposes, the school will not need to ask your permission each time the district wishes to use this information for the school-sponsored purposes listed.

Bacterial Meningitis

State law specifically requires the district to provide the following information:

- What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

- What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

- What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?

You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>. A Spanish version of this prescribed notice is available on TEA's Web site at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/taa/comm020802esp.doc>.

SECTION II: INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is conveniently organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact Mr. Jones at 928-5464.

ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day’s learning on the previous day’s, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student’s mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws, one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit, are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below:

Compulsory Attendance

State law requires that a student between the ages of six and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18th birthday is required to attend each school day. If a student 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, however, the district may revoke the student’s enrollment. The student’s presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing.

Students enrolled in prekindergarten or kindergarten are required to attend school.

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of a diagnostic reading instrument.

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction (termed “accelerated instruction” by the state) assigned by a grade placement committee and basic skills for ninth graders; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

A court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student:

- Is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

MIS ATTENDANCE POLICY

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The administration, faculty, and staff at MIS believe that one of the most important aspects of education is attendance in school. If a child is not present for instruction, that valuable experience cannot be reproduced, and the opportunity for learning is lost. Sadly, we have noticed a sharp increase in the number of absences for reasons that are not absolutely necessary, which gives students the message that their success in school is not a family priority. We have also noticed an increase in the number of late arrivals each day, causing disruptions in class for those who came to school on time, prepared to learn.

This is why we have amended our attendance policy, **which applies to all students in 4th and 5th grade.** We ask that you read and familiarize yourself with the changes that will take effect this year. We thank you in advance for your understanding and support as we make a concentrated effort to make a difference for the better!

ATTENDANCE

The Principal will keep track of unexcused absences and will inform the parents by phone or by mail if the student is in violation of the Compulsory School Attendance Law (Texas Education Code 25.092). Parents whose children are found to be in violation of the Attendance Law are subject to fines up to \$500 per offense if the Justice of the Peace deems necessary.

A student must be in his classroom by 9:30 a.m. to be counted present for that day. A student must be in class UNTIL 9:30 to be counted present that day. If a student is ill upon arrival at school and the nurse decides it is necessary for the child to go home, the student will automatically be given an excused absence for that day, unless it is after 9:30 a.m., in which case the child will be counted present.

When a student is absent, the child's parent or guardian must call the MIS at 928-5464 before 8:30 a.m. If the contact is not made, the Attendance Clerk will schedule an AlertNow message to be sent to the student's primary phone number as a reminder.

When a student returns to school the same day of a medical appointment, the student will not be counted absent for ADA/Funding purposes if the student brings verification to the office that they were at a doctor appointment, etc. The student must attend class before or after a doctor appointment in order to be counted present for that day.

If a student is not in attendance 90% of the days of school, he/she may be in jeopardy of being retained in his present grade level. This decision is made by the campus Attendance Committee, who reviews the parent/doctor notes on file for the student during this process. Please keep in mind that if a student returns to school on the same day of the absence with a note from the doctor stating he/she was seen by the doctor that day, there will be no record of absence for that day.

LEAVING BEFORE THE SCHOOL DAY ENDS

Students are expected to remain in school until the end of the school day. If it is absolutely necessary for a student to be picked up early, he must be signed out in the office by an adult listed in the computer as an emergency contact. That person will then visit the classroom to pick up the student. Students will not be allowed to leave early on a regular basis without first obtaining permission from the campus principal.

TARDINESS AND PERFECT ATTENDANCE

There is scheduled supervision for students starting at 7:30 a.m. Breakfast is served to all students free of charge at 7:45. Teaching begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. each morning.

Students entering school after 8:00 will report to the office to check in.

Students who are counted present each school day will be eligible for a perfect attendance award at the end of the year.

Attendance for Credit

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If the student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit for the class.

If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed the plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit, if appropriate. [See policies at FEC.]

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for religious holy days and documented health-care appointments will be considered days of attendance for this purpose. [See policies at FEB.]
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district. For a student transferring into the district after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive credit will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

Doctor's Note After An Absence for Illness

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than four consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school. [See FEC(LOCAL).]

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The school counselor provides students and parents information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices. [see policy EIF.]

AWARDS AND HONORS

Numerous awards are given throughout the entire year in each classroom at MIS. At the end of the year, students will be recognized on their many accomplishments.

Honor Roll criteria for Grades 4 and 5:

A Honor Roll is 90 or above in ALL subject areas excluding PE and FA.

A-B Honor Roll is 90 or above in at least two subject areas and 80 or above in the remaining subject areas excluding PE and FA.

Honor roll students shall acquire an E, S, or N in citizenship.

First through Fifth grade recognize A-Team students. Students must be on the A Honor Roll for the entire school year.

Fifth grade students are eligible for the Top Ten award. This award is determined by averaging the core subjects (reading, math, language, science, social studies).

Fifth grade students are eligible to receive the Presidential Outstanding Academic Excellence award. These students must meet requirements as outlined by the Federal Government.

Fifth grade students are eligible to receive the Presidential Outstanding Academic Achievement award. Students must meet the requirements as outlined by the Federal Government.

Fourth and Fifth grade students will receive AR awards which are determined by each grade level.

BULLYING

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students directs written or verbal expressions or physical conduct against another student and the behavior results in harm to the student or the student's property, places a student in fear of harm to himself or his property, or is so severe that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit bullying and to respond to reports of bullying. [See FFI(LOCAL).]

CLASS SCHEDULES

There is no scheduled supervision of students until 7:30a.m.

Breakfast is served at 7:45 a.m. Students must report to their homeroom to be served.

Students will be tardy if they are not in their classroom at 8:00a.m.

DAILY DISMISSALS:

4th and 5th dismiss at 3:25.

Buses run at 3:35 at the Intermediate.

Parents picking up Intermediate students need to be gone by 3:30 to avoid the buses.

Students who are not picked up 15 minutes after the dismissal time listed, will report to the principal's office. Habitual tardiness on the part of the parent is considered neglect of a child and will be reported to the proper authorities.

Please see attached School Calendar for Early Release Dates.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office [or on the district's Web site at www.Merkel.esc14.net]. (see attached copy of policy)

In general, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these computer resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these resources; violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and their parents should be aware that e-mail using district computers is not private and will be monitored by district staff. [For additional information, see policies at CQ.]

SKYWARD'S PaC FAMILY ACCESS™

The Merkel ISD is happy to announce that it has begun to implement Skyward's PaC Family Access™ system. This new service will allow you to view your child's or children's attendance, grades, schedule, progress, assignments, and emergency information. It is totally secure and as easy as a "Point and Click" to use. For more information on this service, contact Myra Mann at mmann@merkel.esc14.net, or call 928-5464.

Merkel ISD Acceptable Use of Technology and Internet Safety Policy

For Elementary and Intermediate Students of Merkel ISD

The technology resources MISD provides to students are intended to facilitate legitimate educational activities of the schools. The purpose of this policy is to insure that the district's technology resources are used only for appropriate purposes. In addition, this policy addresses preventing minors from accessing inappropriate material on the Internet, and the safety and security of minors. To gain access to the network and Internet, all students must obtain parental permission as verified by the signatures on the form attached to this policy.

The following rules apply to all technology-based equipment at Merkel Schools, including computer labs, classroom computers, telecommunications and AV equipment.

Acceptable uses of technology:

School computers are the property of MISD, and are for school-related use only. Acceptable activities include instruction, independent study, authored research, and the business of student organizations and activities. Examples of unacceptable uses include, but are not limited to:

- *Computers may not be used to harass or defame others.* This includes intentionally harming another's reputation, sending offensive or unwelcome messages, or making another person feel uncomfortable.
- *Any use of computers that violates the law or encourages others to violate the law is prohibited.* Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Selling or advertising any illegal substance
 - Downloading, viewing or transmitting pornographic images
 - Downloading, viewing or transmitting information on making weapons, planning violent events, or harming others.
 - Obtaining or transmitting confidential, trade secret information, or copyrighted materials.
- *Making copies of school software is prohibited.* In some cases, computers and software may be checked out and used at home. Your technology teacher or campus technology representative can assist you with this. All software installed on school computers must be approved by MISD technology director. Only licensed, approved software may be installed.
- *Do not download or install games, music, or other programs on school computers.* All games must be requested by teachers and used for instructional purposes only. File sharing programs such as Kazaa or Limewire should not be used. Do not use school computers to load iPods or other MP3 players, except as directed by teachers.
- *Any file sharing, other than what has been setup by MISD Technology department, is prohibited.* Do not configure computers to share files, and do not set up unauthorized networks within the district. Also, do not participate in peer-to-peer file-sharing networks.

- *Any form of vandalism of technology resources is prohibited.* This includes:
 - Uploading, developing or possessing a worm, virus, or other harmful programming
 - Participating in hacking or unauthorized access to networks or computers, including keystroke capturing and other methods designed to obtain passwords or computer access.
 - Altering or destroying data belonging to someone else
- *Do not use school resources, including mail and web servers, for commercial or political applications.*
- *Do not engage in activities that compromise the security of network access, other people's accounts, or other networks,* such as disclosing or sharing passwords with others; attempting to obtain passwords to bypass filters and routers, impersonating another user; using one's own software programs on the district's computers; altering computer settings; damaging or modifying computer equipment or software.
- *Students should not be unsupervised while using computers.* Any computer use by students must be monitored by a teacher or aide in the same room. Students should not be sent to computer labs without supervision. Enforcement of this policy requires that teachers and staff monitor students' use of the Internet to ensure compliance.
- *Do not change setting on computers,* including desktop backgrounds, control panel items, power settings, screensavers, etc. These may affect performance and compromise network security.
- *Do not abuse or damage the computers or accessories.* Computers and accessories, such as headphones, cords, speakers, mice, etc., are school property. Any student who damages or destroys school property will be punished according to the guidelines in the MISD Student Code of Conduct, including the assessment of fines and/or cost of replacement. Repeated physical misuse of equipment could result in the loss of computer privileges.

Privacy

There is no expectation of privacy on school networks. Although it does not normally do so, the district reserves the right to access and monitor data storage areas, e-mail and Internet use. This information may be reviewed at random to insure compliance with district policy.

User accounts: Elementary and Intermediate students do not have individual network login accounts. The computers are logged in by teachers or staff. Use only the account that your teacher assigns. Do not login as someone else. Some accounts may have a personal data area for shared information.

- Accessing and using someone else's personal data area is prohibited.
- Do not store music, games, or copyrighted information on your H drive.

Plagiarism

When using information obtained from the Internet or other electronic media, cite references for any facts you present. Using copyrighted information without proper references is illegal. Users should assume that all materials are protected unless there is explicit permission on the materials to use them.

Internet Safety

Direct communication: In order to avoid compromising the safety and security of minors when using e-mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications :

- *E-mail accounts not assigned by MISD are not permitted.* HotMail, Yahoo mail and similar public e-mail accounts are not to be accessed at school. If your teacher sets up a Gaggle.net mail account, you MAY use it at school.
- *Real-time chat and instant messaging of any kind is prohibited.* Do not install IRC, IM, or other chat clients.

Internet Filtering Technology: Access beyond MISD's own network, specifically to the Internet and the World Wide Web, provides many opportunities for research and educational use. However, it raises safety concerns also. The safety and privacy rules that govern general technology and district computer use apply to the Internet as well. In addition, MISD employs technology protection measures that block or filter Internet access to some Internet sites that are not in accordance with the policy of MISD.

- The technology protection measure (filter) that blocks or filters Internet access may be disabled by a MISD staff member for bona fide research purposes **by an adult**. Students may NOT disable the filter.
- A staff member may override the technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access for a student to access a site with legitimate educational value that is wrongly blocked by the technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access.
- Any student who attempts to override the filter may be disciplined. This includes, but is not limited to, using a password or proxy server to bypass the filter.

- The filter password should NOT be given to students. If a student requires a staff member to override the block, the password must be entered by the staff members. Students who use the password to override the block for any reason may be disciplined.
- MISD staff will monitor students' use of the Internet to ensure enforcement of policy.
- Users should be aware that filtering software does not block ALL inappropriate Web sites. Report all inappropriate sites not blocked by filters to a technology administrator for appropriate action.

General Internet Safety:

- Students shall not disclose personal information, such as name, school, address, phone numbers, etc. outside of the school network.
- Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone one has "met" on the computer network or Internet without a parent's permission.
- "Cyberbullying" of another student will not be tolerated.
- Students involved in Web Development or other classes may post content to a MISD web server. When posting information, please take care not to violate the privacy of others, or jeopardize the health and safety of students. Do not post personal information, or use names with student pictures. In addition, avoid information which is obscene or libelous, causes disruption of school activities, or violates any other aspect of school policy.

CONDUCT

Applicability of School Rules

As required by law, the board has adopted a *Student Code of Conduct* that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus—and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as campus and classroom rules.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling the student—may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct* and policy FO(LOCAL) in the district’s policy manual.

Disruptions

As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in district vehicles.

Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess telecommunications devices, including mobile telephones; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing. The use of mobile telephones in locker rooms or restroom areas at any time while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event is strictly prohibited.

A student who uses a telecommunications device during the school day shall have the device confiscated. The parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal’s office for a fee of \$15.

Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or student’s parents will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. The district will not be responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen telecommunications devices.

Other Electronic Devices

Students are not permitted to possess such items as radios, CD players, MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, games, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained from the principal. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. The district will not be responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device.

Social Events

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest. A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted. Students are to stay in the stands at games.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases, HEAD LICE, or HIGH FEVER, are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Department of State Health Services regarding these diseases.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Parents of students with a communicable or contagious disease are asked to telephone the school nurse so that other students who have been exposed to the disease can be alerted. Students with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school when their disease is contagious. These diseases include:

AIDS (HIV Infection)*

Campylobacteriosis

Chickenpox

Diphtheria

Fever (100.4 or greater)

Gastroenteritis, Viral

Giardiasis

Meningitis, viral

Mumps

Pink Eye (conjunctivitis)

Poliomyelitis (polio)

Ringworm of the scalp

Rubella (German measles)

Salmonellas

Head lice (pediculosis)
Hepatitis, Viral, Type A
Impetigo
Influenza
Measles (Rubella)
Meningitis, bacterial

Shingellosis
Streptococcal
Sore Throat/Scarlet fever
Tuberculosis, Pulmonary
Whooping cough (Pertussis)

*Students with AIDS/HIV infection shall be excluded when the child's physician determines that a severe or chronic skin eruption or lesion that cannot be covered poses a threat to others. The child's parents and physician should be advised in the case of measles, rubella or chickenpox outbreaks in the school that may pose a health threat to the immunosuppressed child.

BACTERIAL MENINGITIS

Senate Bill 31 requires that all student handbooks contain the following information on Bacterial Meningitis.

WHAT IS MENINGITIS?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children over 1 year old and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

HOW SERIOUS IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

HOW IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS SPREAD?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

The germ **does not** cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

HOW CAN BACTERIAL MENINGITIS BE PREVENTED?

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85-90%). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within 7 to 10 days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to 5 years.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOU OR A FRIEND MIGHT HAVE BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?

Seek prompt medical attention.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Texas Department of Health office to ask about meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov and the Texas Department of Health: www.tdh.state.tx.us. This information is also available in Spanish. Please see the school secretary.

HEAD LICE (PEDICULOSIS)

Children are naturally affectionate. They share personal things such as caps, helmets, combs, brushes, etc. They are not aware or sometimes forget that in sharing these items they also may share head lice!

Head lice can happen to everyone. It is not a sign of poor health habits or being dirty. Head lice can occur at any age, in any ethnic group, and to either sex. It doesn't just happen to "other people". It could happen to your children. It is important to learn how to recognize it, how to treat it, and how to prevent it from happening again.

Head lice are tiny insects that live in human hair. They hatch from small eggs, called nits, that are attached to the base of individual hairs. The eggs hatch in about seven to ten days, with the new lice reaching maturity in about two weeks. Since head lice multiply rapidly, they should be treated promptly.

Head lice can be transmitted in several ways – by playing "head to head", or sharing personal items such as combs, hairbrushes, hats, ribbons, scarves, or other head coverings. It is important to remind your children of the reasons for not sharing these items. Personal cleanliness does not prevent a person from getting head lice.

WHAT YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR: Persistent itching of the head and back of the neck can indicate head lice. You should look for infected scratch marks or a rash on the scalp. **MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL:** Look for nits attached to individual hairs. Sometimes small white specks in the hair such as dandruff can be confused with nits. Nits, however, are very difficult to remove, while dandruff will brush away easily. Live nits are usually brownish in color and are close to the scalp, while hatched (dead) nits are white and are farther down the hair shaft.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TREATMENT AND CONTROL OF HEAD LICE AND NITS: Most lice have become immune to many of the pediculicide shampoos. These shampoos can still be used, but they will not kill all of the lice. These products should not be used more than once in a

seven day period. Therefore, other treatments are needed between lice shampoos. There are several new natural lice products on the market now – Lice Guard, Hair Clean 1-2-3, and the olive oil treatment, which takes 14 days to complete but has been very successful.

1. Clean hair using the product of your choice. Follow directions as recommended on the product.
2. Remove nits. Step 2 or Clear Rinse are two products that will loosen the nits. Nit combs are also available. I have found that the metal combs work better, but your fingernails are your best bet. This is a very time-consuming job. Have your child read to you or do math problems while picking out nits.
3. Household disinfection should be carried out at the same time as the child's treatment.
 - a. Soak combs and brushes for 20 minutes in hot, soapy water or pediculicide shampoo.
 - b. Wash bedding and clothing in very hot water. Dry 20 minutes in the dryer, or press with a hot iron.
 - c. Non-washable items should be dry-cleaned or sealed in a plastic bag for at least 3 weeks. This includes stuffed animals.
 - d. Vacuum carpet, upholstery, pillows, and mattresses which may have been exposed to head lice.
4. Check your child's hair daily for lice that might have been missed by treatment or that might have been passed back to the child from another child.
5. Repeat treatment of the hair in 7 to 10 days, depending on the pediculicide used, to assure that if any nits have hatched the lice will be killed before they can lay more eggs. Olive oil treatment information is available on request.
6. Check your child's hair weekly as a preventive measure.

The following is an all-natural head lice shampoo that can be used as often as needed.

- * Mix 1 cup apple cider vinegar and 1/4 cup shampoo. DO NOT USE WHITE VINEGAR.
- * Add 2 ounces of vinegar/shampoo mixture to hair and massage for 5 minutes. DO NOT RINSE.
- * Add 2 more ounces of vinegar/shampoo mixture and massage 5 more minutes. DO NOT RINSE.
- * Leave product on hair and scalp for 15 minutes.
- * With shampoo still in the hair, comb through the hair with any fine tooth comb to assist in removing the nits that have been released.
- * Rinse thoroughly with a strong spray of very warm water. The lice and the nits will rinse out.
- * Inspect hair under bright light and remove any nits still found in the hair.

When used properly, you can be nit-free in 20 minutes. It is recommended that you use this shampoo mixture every day until all nits and lice are removed from the hair. Since this is an all-natural shampoo mixture, it will not hurt to use this every day as a regular shampoo.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please feel free to contact Vickie Rister at 928-5511, extension 1206.

COUNSELING

Personal Counseling

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with the counselor should make an appointment by calling 928-5464.

Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment

The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent. Parental consent is not necessary when a psychological examination, test, or treatment is required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

[For more information, refer to FFE(LEGAL) and FFG(EXHIBIT).]

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Taken the Course

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit for it—may, in circumstances determined by the teacher, counselor, principal, or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, correspondence courses, or independent study supervised by a teacher.

The counselor or principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject.

The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an exam.

A student may not use this exam, however, to regain eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

[For further information, see the counselor and policies EEJA.]

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Not Taken the Course

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has had no prior instruction. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2009–2010 school year include:

Dates Scheduled: Dates for exams are TBA.

A student will earn credit with a passing score of at least 90 on the exam.

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the principal no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. The district will not honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. If the district agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the district, the parent must purchase a test from a university approved by the State Board of Education. [For further information, see EEJB(LOCAL).]

DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

The district believes that all students learn best in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. [See policy FFH]

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that it negatively affects the student.

Harassment

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. A copy of the district's policy is available on the district's Web site.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student is prohibited.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic

and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Retaliation against a student might occur when a student receives threats from another student or an employee or when an employee imposes an unjustified punishment or unwarranted grade reduction. Retaliation does not include petty slights and annoyances from other students or negative comments from a teacher that are justified by a student's poor academic performance in the classroom.

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, counselor, principal or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. See policy FFH(LOCAL) for the appropriate districts officials to whom to make a report.

Investigation of Report

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district.

In the event prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy.

If the district's investigation indicated that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

DISTANCE LEARNING

Merkel ISD provides the students of the district with a distance learning lab which is located on the Intermediate campus. During the school year our students may have the opportunity to access museums or other educational places by television/computer access. Our students may also have the opportunity to converse with other classrooms from other towns or states through the use of the lab. All activities are teacher facilitated. Students are required to follow all guidelines when using the DL Lab.

DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS

School Materials

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc.

The school newspaper and the yearbook are available to students.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

Nonschool Materials...from students

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before posting, circulating, or distributing written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any nonschool material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made in two school days.

The principal has designated the office as the location for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by students. [See policies at FNAA.]

A student may appeal a principal's decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who posts nonschool material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Materials displayed without the principal's approval will be removed.

Nonschool Materials...from others

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by policy at GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any nonschool material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the principal for prior review. The principal will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies at DGBA, FNG, or GF.]

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a noncurriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All nonschool materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

DRESS AND GROOMING

The district's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

- Dress or skirt length shall not allow indecent exposure when the student is sitting or standing or performing school activities.
- Spaghetti strap tops/dresses, halter tops or strapless tops/dresses are NOT allowed unless worn over an approved top.
- See through tops, halter tops, midriff tops, tank tops, low-cut tops, or spaghetti straps are NOT allowed. Sleeveless clothing must be cut close to the armpit area to be acceptable.
- Short shorts and biker shorts are NOT allowed.
- Clothing with alcoholic beverage, drugs, or indecent slogans or pictures will NOT be permitted.
- Male students are NOT allowed to wear earrings.
- Hair should NOT obscure vision.
- NO hats should be worn in the building.
- NO baseball cleats, skate shoes, or high heels are to be worn.
- Excessively baggy pants are not allowed.
- NO make-up or lipstick is allowed.

If clothing worn to school is deemed inappropriate, students may be asked to call parents to bring them acceptable attire.

The District's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, and minimizes safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the standards established by the administration and approved by the Merkel ISD Board of Trustees.

The **principal** will determine the appropriateness of clothing, grooming, or attire not addressed in the policy, which creates a distraction to the educational process and may prohibit the clothing or attire for his or her campus. Administrators have the discretion to determine the appropriateness of dress and grooming and to make special exceptions, including religious or medical necessities.

The principal, in cooperation with the sponsor, coach, or other persons in charge of an extracurricular activity, may regulate the dress and grooming of students who participate in the activity. Students who violate established dress and grooming standards for a specific activity may be removed or excluded from the activity for a period to be determined by the principal or sponsor, and may be subject to other disciplinary action, as specified in the student code of conduct.

HAIR: Male - Hair must be clean neatly groomed and worn in a style that does not cover the eyes or eyebrows. Students' hair must be neatly trimmed and in a style that does not completely cover the ear and has a length not below the bottom of the collar of a button-up shirt. Students must be clean shaven. Sideburns may be extended no lower than the bottom of the ear and must be trimmed in straight line without flares at the bottom. Hair must be a natural color.

Female - Hair must be clean, neatly groomed and worn in a style that does not cover the eyes or eyebrows. Hair must be a natural color.

Designs cut in the hair will not be permitted.

Mohawks will NOT be permitted.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Participation in school-related activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Eligibility for participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than a class identified as honors or advanced by either the State Board of Education or by the local board of trustees—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.

- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

Please note: Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the *Student Code of Conduct* or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization’s standards of behavior. [For further information, see policies at FM and FO.]

FEES

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

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Personal athletic equipment and apparel.
- Pictures, yearbooks, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for credit by exam in cases for acceleration.

FUND-RAISING

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the superintendent before the event. [For further information, see policies at FJ and GE.]

GRADING GUIDELINES

In grades 4-5, achievement is reported to parents as: Progress Reports and/or Report Card.

If a student in grades 4 through 5 receives a six weeks grade of less than 70 in any class or subject, the parent may need to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject.

HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS

Physical Activity for Students in Elementary and Middle School

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in kindergarten through grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week.

School Health Advisory Council

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held 3 meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from the school nurse newsletter. [See also policies at BDF and EHAA.]

Physical Fitness Assessment

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3-12. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to Mr. Jones to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

Vending Machines

The district has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines, [See policies at CO and FFA.]

Other Health-Related Matters

Tobacco Prohibited

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of tobacco products by students and others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the *Student Code of Conduct* and policies at FNCD and GKA.]

Asbestos Management Plan

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Hood.

Pest Management Plan

The district applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact Steve Rains.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, Gaylon Brnovak and Region 14 contact, Martha Smallwood.

HOMEWORK

Students are responsible to adhere to ALL homework rules and guidelines set forth by their teachers. It is the responsibility of the student to complete the assignment by the specified time.

All Intermediate students will receive one homework pass at the beginning of the school year that can be used one time for one class during the first six weeks only. This is not a pass NOT to do the work, but it is a pass that will let the student finish the work no later than the next school day without any penalties. After the first six weeks, students with perfect attendance of those

who attain A or A-B honor roll will be given a homework pass for the following six weeks period. (Only one pass will be given per student per six weeks). Each pass will be dated and is only good for that six weeks. Students will be responsible for keeping up with their homework passes. At the end of the year, students who have received a homework pass or passes throughout the year and have not used them may turn in the pass or passes for a special treat. The more passes the better the treat, so don't throw away the unused passes. These unused passes must be turned in to the homeroom teacher by the end of the fifth week of the last six weeks in order to receive the treat.

IMMUNIZATION

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services, Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. The immunizations required are: diphtheria, rubeola (measles), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and varicella (chicken pox). The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the Department of State Health Services. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition. [For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the Department of State Health Services Web site: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.]

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Questioning of Students

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

Students Taken Into Custody

State law requires the district to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who is required to register as a sex offender or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

[For further information, see policies FL (LEGAL) and GRA(LEGAL).]

MAKEUP WORK

Routine and In-depth Makeup Work Assignments

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

If a student knows he/she is going to be missing class for prearranged activities such as family trips, stock shows, etc., class assignments should be attained, completed, and ready to turn in on their first day back to class.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. [For further information, see policy EIAB(LOCAL).]

A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

DAEP Makeup Work

A student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, a foundation curriculum course in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the course through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA(LEGAL).]

In-school Suspension Makeup Work

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FO(LEGAL).]

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

- Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer:
 - Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
 - Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
 - Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.

- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
- In certain emergency situations, the district will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:
 - In accordance with the guidelines developed with the district's medical advisor; and
 - When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the district's form.

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider and to the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse or principal.

In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or principal for information. [See policy FFAF(LEGAL).]

Psychotropic Drugs

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policies at FFAC.]

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS

See FFA(LOCAL)

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge.

One minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. [See policy EC(LEGAL) for more information.]

PRAYER

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

In grades 1 through 5, promotion is based on:

An overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based upon course level, grade level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in reading and mathematics and a grade of 70 or above in two of the following areas: science, social studies, and grammar.[refer to your EIE(LOCAL).]

In addition, at certain grade levels a student—with limited exceptions—will be required to pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), if the student is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and April 15 and is a Texas resident during the week that the TAKS is administered the first time.

- In order to be promoted to grade 4, students must perform satisfactorily on the reading section of the grade 3 assessment in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 assessment in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 8 assessment in English.

Parents of a student in grade 3, 5, or 8 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. Such students will have two additional opportunities to take the test. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher, and the student's parent, will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third failed attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. In order for the student to be promoted, based on standards previously established by the district, the decision of the committee must be unanimous. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. [See policies at EIE.]

Certain students—some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, counselor, or special education director.

Below grade one, promotion may be granted or denied using assessment methods other than numerical grades. A student in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten may be retained if that student fails to show mastery of grade-level TEKS. Parent consent is not necessary in order to retain pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students; however, every attempt will be made to keep parents informed of the academic progress of students who are not achieving grade-level success.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

Because class time is important, doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time.

A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning and follow the campus sign-out procedures before leaving the campus. Otherwise, a student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day. Unless the principal or superintendent has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, the student should receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. The nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent.

REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every 6 weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject.

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal/superintendent and are designed to reflect each student's academic achievement for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. [See policy EIA(LOCAL).]

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG(LOCAL).

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject.

Codes and charts will be used to monitor student progress for Pre-k and K students.

SAFETY

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the district. Although the district has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

Accident Insurance

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies

From time to time, students, teachers, and other district employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

Fire Drill Bells

| | |
|---------|--------------------------|
| 3 bells | leave the building |
| 1 bell | halt; stand at attention |
| 2 bells | return to the classroom |

Tornado Drill Bells

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1 continuous bell | move quietly but quickly to the designated locations |
| 2 bells | return to the classroom |

Elementary Drills will access the public announcement system.

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school would need to have written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers,

allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

Emergency School-Closing Information

If school is to be canceled or delayed due to icy conditions or bad weather listen to the following TV or radio stations:

KTAB TV KBCY 99.7

KTXS TV

KRBC TV

The school will also use the ALERT now system.

If there are changes or updates in our emergency system, we will contact you with further information.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Use by Students Before and After School

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place.

The hallway is open to students before school, beginning at 7:30 a.m.

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

After dismissal of school in the afternoon, and unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher, students must leave campus immediately.

Conduct Before and After School

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices, and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the *Student Code of Conduct* or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

Use of Hallways during Class Time

Loitering or standing in the halls during class is not permitted. During class time, a student must have a hall pass or permission to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass or permission will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Cafeteria Services

The district participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced lunches daily. Free and reduced-price lunches are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential.

The district follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day. [For more information, see policy CO(LEGAL).] See also <http://www.squaremeals.org>.

The District participates in the National School Breakfast Program and in the National School Lunch Program. Free and reduced-price breakfast and lunches are offered based on a student's financial need. Applications for the program are included in the registration packets and may also be obtained from the school secretary and the food service office. We highly encourage all families to complete an application. Only one application per family is needed. Students are to pay for meals in the cafeteria. Payment in any amount may be made at any time and must be marked clearly with the child's name and cafeteria number. The cafeteria uses a computerized system for student accounts. Money put into the account is deducted only when the student passes through the line and enters his/her pin number. Charges are allowed on a very limited basis and for meals only. When a child reaches the credit limit, he/she will receive an alternate meal until the account is paid. Should a parent not wish to allow their child/children to purchase a la carte items, such as ice cream, slushes, etc., from their computerized account, please notify the food service director, Mrs. Brownyn Campbell, at 928-4795, ext. 1108.

| | | |
|---------------------|--|--------|
| Cost for breakfast: | Free | |
| Costs for lunch: | Regular 4 th -5 th | \$2.00 |
| | Reduced | \$.40 |
| | Visitors | \$3.00 |

For students who wish to bring their own lunch, chocolate, white, and strawberry flavored milks are available for purchase at \$.50.

A parent may bring an outside lunch for his or her child ONLY, not friends. Students are not allowed to share ANY portion of a lunch that is brought from home or brought in by a parent for the student.

A student cannot share their food.

Library

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for independent student use during the following times with a teacher permit:

- 7:30-7:45
- 3:15-3:40

Meetings of Non-curriculum-Related Groups

Student-organized, student-led non-curriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB(LOCAL).

A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

SEARCHES

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

Students' Desks and Lockers

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students are not allowed to have locks on their lockers.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the permission of the student. A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. [See also the *Student Code of Conduct*.]

Trained Dogs

The district will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around lockers and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas, or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. An item in a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, and migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, dyslexic students, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact Mrs. Wright.

STEROIDS

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use.

Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

Students participating in UIL athletic competition may be subject to random steroid testing. More information on the UIL testing program may be found on the UIL Web site at http://www.uil.utexas.edu/athletics/health/steroid_information.html.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Tutoring is provided for SSI grades to meet requirements for testing purposes.

TAKS (TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS)

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated tests (such as TAKS: the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–11
- Reading, annually in grades 3–9
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- English language arts in grades 10 and 11
- Social studies in grades 8, 10, and 11
- Science in grades 5, 8, 10, and 11
- Any other subject and grade required by federal law

[See policy EKB(LEGAL).]

Kindergarten through second grade students will take the Texas Primary Reading Inventory test (TPRI). This instrument allows teachers to assess the needs of our students.

TARDINESS

Students will be considered tardy if they are not in the classroom at 8:01. Three tardies will result in an unexcused absence. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action, in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Parents are required to bring their children into the building, sign in, and escort them to class.

TEXTBOOKS

State-approved textbooks are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return a book issued by the school loses the right to free textbooks until the book is returned or paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided textbooks for use at school during the school day.

TRANSFERS

Intra-district transfer students will not be offered bus service.

Transfers may be revoked based on poor attendance and excessive disciplinary incidents.

TRANSPORTATION

School-Sponsored Trips

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. The principal, however, may make an exception if the parent makes a written request that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact the transportation director at 928-5127.

See the *Student Code of Conduct* for provisions regarding transportation to the disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP).

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to

behavioral standards established in this handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.

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

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*; bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

BUS POLICIES AND RULES

The policy of the Merkel ISD is to accommodate the bus riding needs of students as much as possible. The administration of the school will work with families to make attendance at the Merkel/Tye schools a pleasant experience. Eligible bus riders will be allowed to ride on a bus other than the one assigned to them under these circumstances:

1. Students will be allowed to ride a bus other than the one to which they are assigned if there is space available. When the bus reaches its capacity with eligible riders, the ineligible riders will be removed the day after parents have been notified with a "last on, first off" policy.
2. The length of the route will not be extended to deliver an ineligible rider. If the loss of riders on a route during the school year causes the bus to travel extra miles to deliver an ineligible rider, service to the ineligible rider will be discontinued after one week. Parents will be notified before service is discontinued.
3. If room on the bus permits, inter-district transfer students will be allowed to catch a bus at its last regularly scheduled stop and ride to their campus. They will be returned to the last regularly scheduled stop in the afternoon.

4. Intra-district transfer students will not be offered bus service.

5. Students permitted to ride a bus other than the one to which they are assigned must ride the alternate bus each day. Riding on an alternate schedule or only occasionally will not be permitted.

6. An application must be completed and filed with the Merkel ISD Transportation Supervisor for students to be assigned to alternate bus transportation.

Information on eligibility to ride a school bus may be obtained by contacting the transportation supervisor at 928-5127.

If the bus is late arriving or late returning in the afternoon, please contact the bus barn at the number above.

A student being transported in school-owned vehicles is required to comply with the Student Code of Conduct. Any student who fails to comply with that code or established rules of conduct while on school transportation may be denied transportation services and shall be subject to disciplinary action.

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PUPILS RIDING THE SCHOOL BUS

The first and most important job of each driver is to safely deliver your child to school, and safely return your child home. To keep your child safe, the driver must keep his/her eyes on the road, free of distractions. Children who cause driver distractions create a safety issue and possibly could endanger the lives of everyone on the bus. We ask for your help in conveying to your child the importance of following the rules to ensure the safety of the ride to and from school. If we work together, the school year will be safe and successful.

Please emphasize the following expected behaviors:

- Sit in your assigned seat (if applicable).
- Remain seated at all times. Repeated violations of this offense could result in the student being required to wear a seat belt.
- Keep your feet and hands to yourself.
- Treat the bus as you would a classroom.
- Food or drink will be allowed if trash is properly disposed of (driver may choose to take this privilege if problems occur).

- Treat other riders as you would like to be treated.
- Follow the directions of the driver and monitor without arguing.

All bus rules are for the safety of your child.

The following violations of rules are listed with respect to the relationship between the violation and the safety of the ride. Consequences of behavior will range from a warning to immediate removal from the bus. The principal may use the process he/she deems necessary to ensure the safety of the bus, its riders, and all areas around the bus.

LEVEL I (begin with step 1 of Action Taken)

Not in assigned seat

Out of seat

Hands or feet in aisle

Food or drink on the bus (if privilege has been abused)

Throwing trash in floor

LEVEL II (begin with step 2 of Action Taken)

Inappropriate language/cursing/obscene gesture (not directed to the driver)

Hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping

Improper/unsafe loading or unloading procedures

Body parts out of window

Inappropriate items that pertain to sexual behavior

Arguing with driver or monitor

Disrespect to other riders

LEVEL III (begin with step 3 of Action Taken)

Destruction of the bus

Fighting

Sexual harassment or misconduct

Throwing objects inside or outside of the bus

Use of matches or lighters

Disrespect to driver or monitor

LEVEL IV (begin with step 4 of Action Taken)

- Physical attack of driver
- Obscene language directed toward the driver
- Throwing bottles or heavy objects out the window
- Possession of a weapon or weapons
- Possession or use of drugs
- Possession or use of alcohol
- Possession or use of tobacco
- Assault on another student

Action Taken: A bus conduct report will be mailed home on each incident.

1. Warning by the driver or monitor
2. Changed assigned seat and warning by the principal
3. Removal from the bus for a period of 3 days
4. Removal from the bus for a period of 10 days
5. Removal from the bus for the remainder of the semester
6. Removal from the bus for the remainder of the year
7. Other

Parents are not allowed to ride the school bus on school sponsored field trips. They must travel in their personal vehicles if they plan to participate in the field trip.

VANDALISM

The taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and for years to come—littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

VIDEO CAMERAS

For safety purposes, video/audio equipment may be used to monitor student behavior on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video/audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

General Visitors

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the principal's office, sign in, show Driver's License or state issued ID, and obtain a visitor's pass. All visitors are asked to comply with all applicable district policies and procedures.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the principal's office.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

A student who is 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor, may withdraw without parental signature.

GLOSSARY

Accelerated instruction is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level.

ACT refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the American College Test. The test may be a requirement for admission to certain colleges or universities.

ARD is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student's parents are part of the committee.

Attendance Review Committee is sometimes responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit lost because of absences.

DAEP stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students in the DAEP will be separated from students not assigned to the program. The DAEP will focus instruction on English language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self-discipline, and provide for students' educational and behavior needs, as well as supervision and counseling.

FERPA refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

IEP is the written record of the Individualized Education Program prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; accommodations for state or district wide tests, etc.

ISS refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the *Student Code of Conduct*. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

LAT stands for Linguistically Accommodated Testing, which is an assessment process for recent immigrant English language learners who are required to be assessed in certain grades and subjects under the NCLB Act.

NCLB Act is the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) is recommended for all students entering grade 9 and is required by state law for any student in middle school or higher who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

SAT refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

Section 504 is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

State-mandated assessments are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the grade 11 exit-level test is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

Student Code of Conduct is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board; identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from the classroom or campus. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion, and states whether self-defense is a consideration in suspension, DAEP placement, or expulsion. The *Student Code of Conduct* also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

TAKS is the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the state's standardized achievement test currently given to students in certain subjects in grades 3–11.

TAKS-Accommodated is a state mandated assessment based on the same grade-level academic achievement standards of TAKS available to certain students who receive special education services who need specific accommodations, as determined by the student and his or her ARD committee.

TAKS-Alternate is an alternate state mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student and his or her ARD committee.

TAKS-Modified is an alternate state mandated assessment based on modified achievement standards and is administered to eligible students receiving special education services, as determined by the student and his or her ARD committee.

TELPAS stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English language learners make in learning the English language, and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.

UIL refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

