

# **Handbook for Students & Parents**

## **Muhlenberg School District K-6**

**Muhlenberg Elementary Center and CE Cole Intermediate  
Reading, PA**



**2024 - 2025**

## Mission Statement of the Muhlenberg School District

Excellence in Action:  
Equipping, Engaging, Empowering

## Vision Statement of the Muhlenberg School District

The Muhlenberg School District is committed to guiding all students on a path of excellence with active and purposeful learning experiences, a growing and comprehensive curriculum, collaborative and innovative staff and creative use of technology and resources coupled with an unrelenting desire for success.

## Shared Values of the Muhlenberg School District

### Values & Beliefs

- Students learn differently.
- Students learn best with challenging and relevant curriculum.
  - Students thrive in a safe learning environment.
- Teachers lead learning through passion, perseverance and personality.
  - Teachers create a culture of high expectations.
  - Teachers are inspirational role models.
- Students, parents and families, the school, the school board, the community and business leaders create partnerships that drive students' success.
- An informed and involved learning community is essential to the development of strong educational partnerships and quality programs.
  - The learning community equips, engages and empowers learners.

### Muhlenberg Elementary Center, Grades K-3

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Reading, PA 19605  
610-921-8028

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[www.muhlsdk12.org](http://www.muhlsdk12.org)

[www.facebook.com/muhlcecole](http://www.facebook.com/muhlcecole)

### Board of School Directors

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### Administrative Team

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Amanda Foulds, MEC Social Worker

Emily Carmichael, C.E. Cole Social Worker

Shane M. Mathias, CPA, Business Manager

Susan Hawkins, Supervisor of Accounts

Kenneth Patterson, Director of Physical Plant

Mike Mish, Director of Pupil Services and Transportation

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Timothy M. Moyer, Ed. D., Athletic Director

Cathy Shappell, Ed.D., Director of Federal Programs K-12

Kyle Crater, Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12

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## General Information, K-6

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**School Day** - The school day for students begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 3:25 p.m.

Kindergarten hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon for those students who are enrolled as half-day Kindergarten students. Students will be admitted into the building beginning at 8:30 a.m. Arrival after 9:00 a.m. will result in a student being marked tardy.

**Z-Pass** - All students will be provided with a ZPass. This scan card is a program that tracks when and where students get on and off the bus and when walkers or family pick up students depart from the building. The Zpass scan card will be attached to the student's bag and will provide information in real time and is available on [www.zpassplus.com](http://www.zpassplus.com) or the app. Loss or damage of a Z-Pass will incur a replacement fee.

**MEC Arrival** - The entrance to our main parking lot is off of Sharp Avenue at Seventh Avenue. A sign denoting that you are at the Muhlenberg Elementary Center is adjacent to this entrance. Family drop-off is located in the main parking lot. Please follow signage and directions from traffic controllers. Please have your student prepared to exit the right side of the vehicle for safety purposes.

All walkers should utilize the sidewalks and enter the school via the gated entrance at the family drop off area. No parents/guardians will be allowed past the gate.

**CE COLE Arrival** - The walker and parent drop off is located off of Kutztown Road. It is located to the right of the main entrance. The doors open at 8:30 for student arrival. Staff will be provided to supervise students' entry.

**Dismissal** - The official dismissal time for Muhlenberg Elementary Center and CE Cole Intermediate is 3:25 p.m.

**MEC Walkers** - Students permitted by their parents to walk home by themselves will be dismissed at the doors facing C.E. Cole Intermediate and the Muhlenberg Community Library. Please note, for the safety of all students, those who are permitted to walk home are expected to walk straight home and should not enter any vehicle before arriving safely home. Any parent wishing to pick their child up in a vehicle should follow the MEC Family Pick-up procedures.

**CE Cole Walkers** - Students permitted by their parent/guardian to walk home by themselves will be dismissed after the first round of buses is called. Students will exit the building to the right of the main entrance. Please note, for the safety of all children, students who are permitted to walk home are expected to walk straight home, not loiter, and should not enter any vehicle before arriving safely home.

**MEC Family Pick-up** - Parents/guardians who wish to pick their child/children up from school will be required to park in the parking lot off of Kutztown Road and meet their child at the doors facing C.E. Cole Intermediate and the Muhlenberg Community Library. Parents MUST adhere to the policies and procedures set forth in the parent pick-up permission form.

**Bus Students** - Students riding home on a school bus will be dismissed per bus arrival times. The first round of buses will be called at 3:25.

**Parking** - Guests visiting MEC should enter the main parking lot off of Sharp Avenue at Seventh Avenue. Guests visiting CE COLE should enter the main parking lot off Kutztown Road. Guests should park in the designated parking spaces labeled "visitor parking." Any visitor planning to enter the building or pick up a student or paperwork will be required to show proper identification.

**Bicycles** - Due to potential storage, safety, and liability issues that may arise, students are not permitted to bring bicycles to school. Additionally, skateboarding and scooters are prohibited on school property.

**Student Photo Identification Badges** - In an effort to promote safety of all students, Student Photo Identification Badges (ID Badges) will be given to all students. ID Badges MUST be worn in plain sight at all times, except when the wearing of ID Badges is excused for Physical Education Classes, recess, or other activities as determined by staff.

**Telephone Calls and Usage** - Discretion should be used when calling students or teachers during school hours.

Please contact the school only when a message is urgent. Students are not permitted to use the office telephone for personal calls. They are encouraged to assume the responsibility of making arrangements in advance based on the activities of the day. Cell phones/all electronics to be in backpack and TURNED OFF from the school door (AM) to the bus door (PM)

**School Visits** - Parents are not only invited, but are encouraged to visit our schools to observe their student(s) at work and discover the methods and materials used in the instructional process. Parents should make advance arrangements (ten days or longer) with the principal to ensure that their visit won't coincide with a special activity, such as a field trip or a standardized test. When making these arrangements, please keep in mind that a school visit should be limited to a maximum of 1 to 1½ hours. Please remember that there is a difference between school visits, which are solely for observation, and conferences, which are to discuss your child's progress with his or her teacher. Conference appointments should be pre-arranged.

When visiting any Muhlenberg school building, you must enter through the main office. You will be required to provide a photo ID and asked to register in the visitors' book. Our office staff will provide you with a printed badge. You will then apply the badge to your person where it is highly visible to staff who observe you walking through the building. At the end of the day, you must return to the office to sign out in our visitors' book and return the "School Visitor" badge.

Outdoor events held at/by MEC and CE Cole, such as field day, field trips, recess, etc, are still considered school events, and therefore, visitors must abide by the school visitation policy.

**Visitors and Volunteers -**

**Visitor** - as distinguished from a volunteer, is an individual whose actions do not rise to the level of a volunteer by virtue of their business with the district. A visitor shall include, but not be limited to,

1. A parent, close relative or guardian who visits a classroom, auditorium, other school common area, or a private meeting area to make a delivery to, or meet with, a student who is the individual's child or other close relative or for whom the individual is the guardian
2. An individual who attends a sports event or other extracurricular activity as a spectator only
3. An individual who is a Career Day or other similar speaker or participant visiting to share information with students.

**Volunteer** - any adult who is responsible for a child's welfare, or who cares, supervises, guides or controls a child or children and has routine interaction with such child or children without compensation, remuneration or other consideration in connection with a school program, activity, or service. Volunteers may perform only such duties as may be performed by a person not licensed as a classroom teacher. The judgment of the certified personnel, to whom the volunteer is assigned, will be used to define the duties to be performed.

Examples of a volunteer shall include:

1. An individual who serves as a daily, weekly or other periodically scheduled classroom assistant
2. An individual who serves as a chaperone during school sponsored activities
3. An individual who in connection with a school sponsored activity has contact with a child with respect to whom the individual is not the parent, close relative or guardian of the child.

Any and all volunteers who will be working directly with students or coming into contact with students are required to submit to a Pennsylvania Criminal History Record Check (Act 34) and Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Act 151). The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has added a requirement, as of January 1, 2015, that all volunteers must certify that they have resided in Pennsylvania for the entire previous ten (10) years or if they are unable to do so, they must submit the FBI Federal Criminal History Report (fingerprinting). Information to apply for these clearances may be obtained at the school office or on the Muhlenberg School District Website.

**Volunteer Packet** - The volunteer packet information can be located on the district website. This packet needs to be completed and approved by district administration prior to volunteering within the district.

**Lunch Schedule** - Each lunch period lasts thirty minutes.

**Cafeteria** - Breakfast and lunch will be provided to all students at no cost. Additional a la carte items will be available for purchase. Only school provided breakfast items are allowed in our cafeterias.

If you are providing lunch for your child, all items must be sealed and in a lunch container. (i.e., reusable grocery bag, brown bag, lunch box.)

**MEC-** MEC breakfast will be served between 8:30-9:00 each day.

**C.E. Cole-** C.E. Cole hot breakfast will be served from 8:30-8:45 each day. A bagged breakfast will be provided after 8:45. A monthly menu is available on the Muhlenberg School District website. For students who bring their lunches to school, milk and other items are available as supplements. NO bags will be allowed in the lunchroom except a lunch bag.

**Recess K-4** - Research clearly indicates that exercise stimulates thinking and learning. All students will be expected to participate in outdoor recess unless the temperatures drop below freezing or there is precipitation. If a child is to stay indoors during a recess period, we must have a written request from a physician.

**CE Cole Chorus and Band** - CE Cole chorus and band is open to fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students who are interested in singing with a large group. Basic vocal skills, including some harmony, are covered. Rehearsals are held during the school day. Students who are in good academic standing may miss content area subjects to participate in chorus. Students slipping below good academic standing will need to miss chorus to bring grades and/or performance back up to standard. Information regarding the starting dates for the rehearsals will be provided. A letter of permission will be sent home with all students.

#### **Pupil Evaluation**

- **MEC Students will be evaluated on a 4 point scale:**
  - 0 Unable to access (not enough work/data to determine whether or not a student has mastered a skill)
  - 1 Does not yet meet grade level standards
  - 2 Beginning to demonstrate and apply grade level standards
  - 3 Demonstrates and applies grade level standards
  - 4 Consistently demonstrates, at or above, grade level standards
- **CE Cole students will be evaluated on a percentage scale for core subject areas of Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Special area classes will be evaluated on a 4 point scale.**

**Positive Behavioral Intervention System-** The primary goal is to help students develop self-discipline. The creation of an atmosphere conducive to effective teaching, learning and living is the shared responsibility of the school community. To achieve this goal, we have implemented a school-wide positive behavioral support system, which emphasizes positive behavior.

At all times, students are expected to demonstrate behaviors that enhance a positive learning environment as well as abide by the following school expectations:

#### **MEC High Five Expectations**

**Be Responsible**  
**Be Respectful**  
**Be Prepared**  
**Follow Directions**  
**Use Self Control**

#### **#COLEture Cornerstones**

**Respect**  
**Responsibility**  
**Readiness**  
**Resilience**

During the school day, we emphasize and reward positive behavior. Recognition slips will be given to students and/or whole classes who have been emulating the components of the PBIS systems in the classroom, hallway, cafeteria, or playground.

**MEC “Cool Muhl” Award** - Throughout the school year, students who demonstrate social and academic characteristics that exemplify growth of expectations may be nominated by a staff member for this award. Cool Muhl character traits include but are not limited to respect, responsibility, honesty, kindness, fairness, and citizenship.

**Cole Student of the Month Award** - Teachers nominate students based on social academic achievement in the classroom that exemplify CE Cole expectations of respect, responsibility, kindness, honesty, and citizenship.

**No Place For Hate (NPFH)** - No Place For Hate is an initiative of the Anti-Defamation League. It enables our school to challenge anti-semitism, racism and bigotry in all forms. No Place For Hate aims to reduce bias and bullying, increase appreciation for diversity and build communities of respect. We will incorporate ADL’s anti-bias and bullying prevention resources with their existing programming to form the powerful message that all students have a place to belong at MEC.

**Toys in School** - The district provides necessary recess equipment, therefore all toys, including trading cards, should be left at home. Should students bring toys to school, the following actions could be levied:

- First offense: The teacher will ask the student to put the toys/cards in his/her backpack and take them home.
- Further offenses: The toys/cards brought to school will be confiscated by the classroom teacher. Parents/guardians will need to make arrangements with the classroom teacher to pick up the student’s toys/cards.

Those toys/cards left in school until the end of the school year will be returned to the students on the last day of school. Please note that the district shall not be liable for the loss, damage or misuse of any toys or materials brought to school by a student. No balls are to be brought to school.

Spinners and other over-the-counter devices sold for therapeutic reasons are considered toys unless specifically prescribed by a family doctor or a school professional.



**SPECIAL NOTE:** Toy guns, toy weapons and look-alikes are treated under the same provisions as the district weapons policy, including the possible consequence of full expulsion from school. Toy guns, toy weapons and look-alikes are never permitted on the bus, in school or on school property. (Policy 218.1)

**Personal Belongings** - The clothing and personal or family possessions a student wears or brings to school should be marked clearly with his or her name. Money should be kept in a secured wallet or envelope and in the student’s possession. At no time, for any reason, should students exchange money in school or on the bus.

**Lost and Found** - Each year many unclaimed articles are found in and around the school. If a student has lost something, contact the classroom teacher. At the conclusion of each semester, unclaimed items will be donated or discarded.

**Emergency Drills** - Fire and other emergency drills are conducted no less than once per month, even during cold weather, as required by Section 15-1517 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949.

**School Delays and Closing** - Due to an emergency event such as inclement weather, the district may be delayed, dismissed early or closed. Families will be contacted by the district via telephone. This information will also be posted on WFMZ (local TV station). All pre-planned early dismissals and vacation dates are listed on the school calendar, a copy of which is given to every family.

**Virtual Days** - Due to an emergency event such as inclement weather, the district may require students to learn from home. Families will be contacted by the district via phone. Technology devices will be sent home so students can access learning on these designated days.



**SPECIAL NOTE** To ensure you always receive our automated phone messages and alerts, please make sure the school always has an updated and valid phone number for all parents/guardians.

## **Food and Drinks**

**Snacks** - All food/snacks items should be “snack size 1.5 oz. or less.

**Drink** -Students may have a closed container of water for classroom consumption. Beverages for lunch need to be in a closed container and individually sized. NO outside drinks allowed such as Prime, Redbull, Soda. Sharing of food or drinks is not allowed.

**Classroom Celebrations** - In accordance with our district’s School Wellness Policy, healthy snacks and drinks are highly encouraged for events. Please see the Approved Snack Options [list](#).

**Birthday Flowers/Balloons/Parties** - Birthday parties shall not be held on school time. Parents should give advance notice to the classroom teacher if they want to send a birthday snack to school. Please see the Approved Snack Option [list](#). Students will not be permitted to receive flowers or balloons or other personal items at school on their birthday or other special occasion. We ask that families refrain from sending flowers or balloons or other personal items to the school.

**Homework** - Such assignments should benefit students by strengthening skills, stimulating learning, and developing responsibility. The amount of homework assigned is based on age, grade, and level of achievement. Among the purposes of homework are: to enrich or extend what has been learned in the classroom; to practice skills; to read for enrichment or enjoyment; to conduct research as an outgrowth of classroom activities, and to learn how to work independently.

In order for a student to be successful in school, a good working relationship is needed among teachers, parents, and children. Parents can assist students in assuming responsibility for homework by establishing a time and a place at home for accomplishing the assignment and by encouraging their children to submit all assignments on time.

**Medical and Dental Appointments** - Written requests for a child to leave school early for a medical or dental appointment must be sent to school with the child prior to or on the day of the scheduled appointment. A child will be excused only for the amount of time necessary, not the entire day. The child will only be released to a pre-approved adult with proper identification. Unless an emergency situation exists, we encourage you to schedule appointments after 2:30 p.m.

**Media Release** – Parents who **do not** wish to have their child’s name or picture publicized, including in our school yearbook, social media or news letters, must come to the Elementary Center or Cole office to complete a media release form. Children whose parents have not completed the form will be included in all publications.

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## **School Policies**

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**Student Admission/Withdrawal (Policy 201, Policy 208)** - The Board establishes the district’s entry age for beginners as six (6) years by August 31, in accordance with state law and regulations. A parent/guardian may enroll their child by visiting the building office to obtain a registration packet. When withdrawal is necessary, parents must visit the school office to sign release of records and withdrawal forms so that the child’s records can be forwarded to the new school. No student of compulsory school age will be permitted to withdraw without the written consent of a parent/guardian and supporting justification.

**Class Change Policy** - We will not change classes unless it is determined to be an absolute necessity based on student data. Class changes will be determined based on student academic data and social/emotional needs. This determination will be made by a team consisting of; administration, classroom teacher, support teacher, school counselor, social worker, and family.

**Student Attendance/Compulsory School Age (Policy 204)** - As defined in the **Pennsylvania Public School Code §1326, 1327**, compulsory school age is the period of a child's life from the time he or she enters school, which shall be no later than the age of 6 years, until the age of 18. Children of school age are expected to attend school regularly.



**Absence from School (Policy 204)** – Excused absence includes illness of pupil, quarantine, death in the immediate family, impassable roads, and exceptional urgent reasons that affect the child.

If your child is too ill to attend classes, please call the school between 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. to report the absence. If an absence is expected to last for an extended period of time, parents should notify school administrators.

**Educational Tours/Trips (Policy 204)** - Requests for educational trips to be taken during the school year must be submitted in writing to the building principal at least one week in advance of the scheduled trip. Request letters must include the dates of absence, the destination, and a statement of educational benefit to the student.

The principal may approve student trips with families of up to but no more than 5 days of school. No more than three such trips will be approved in one school year. The 5-day limit shall apply to the accumulated total of approved trips. Parents will be given written specific reasons for disapproved trips.

Educational travel will not be approved during state mandated testing for students in test-taking grades.

**Excused/Lawful Absence (Policy 204)** - Parents/Guardians and students shall submit the written explanation within three (3) school days of the absence. If the parent/guardian fails to provide a written excuse within three (3) school days of the absence, the absence will be permanently counted as unlawful or unexcused. Unexcused absences include but are not limited to parental neglect including oversleeping or missing the bus.

When a student has missed 10 days of school, the matter of which an absence is excused or unexcused is no longer relevant and all absences will count as unlawful unless excused by a doctor’s note.

**Student Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC)** - After a student is considered **habitually truant** a SAIC will be scheduled to address school attendance concerns. District staff shall notify parents/guardians with the date and time of the SAIC. The purpose of the SAIC is to examine the student’s absences and reason for absences in an effort to approve attendance with or without additional services.

**Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP)** - This is a plan completed during the SAIC in an effort to support and approve a student’s attendance.

**Lawful Absence** - A student excused from school for mental, physical, or other urgent reasons: Illness, family emergency, death of a family member, medical or dental appointments, authorized school activities, educational travel with prior approval, and attendance at legal or court proceedings, activities, educational travel with prior approval, and attendance at legal or court proceedings

**Unlawful Absence** - Absences shall be treated as unlawful until the school receives a written excuse explaining an acceptable absence, to be submitted within three days of the absence. If an unacceptable absence is received, the absence will remain as unlawful.

| Terminology              | Definition   | Action Taken by School  | Action Taken by Family   |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Truant</b>            | A student is considered <b>truant</b> after <b>3 unlawful</b> absences.            | Parents/guardians will receive an official attendance notice in the mail.   | Parents/guardians should collaborate with student and teacher to communicate absences and ensure excuse blanks are turned in within 3 days of the absence. |
| <b>Habitually Truant</b> | A student is considered <b>habitually truant</b> after <b>6 unlawful</b> absences. | Parents/guardians will receive an official attendance notice in the mail that will include a scheduled SAIC meeting to support and improve regular school | Parents/guardians should attend the scheduled SAIC meeting to work with the school to support and improve regular school attendance.                       |

|                           |   |  |  |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|
|                           |   | attendance.  |  |
| <b>Chronically Absent</b> | A student is considered <b>chronically absent</b> once they have accumulated <b>10 or more</b> excused OR unexcused absences. | Parents/guardians will receive another official attendance notice in the mail that will include a scheduled SAIC meeting to support and improve regular school attendance. | Parents/guardians should attend the scheduled SAIC meeting to work with the school to support and improve regular school attendance. <i>All future absences from that point must be followed up with a doctor's note in order for that absence to be considered excused.</i> |

If a **chronically absent** student's attendance does not improve, the school holds the authority to file a citation with local courts and/or refer family to school or community based programs.

**Discrimination/Harassment Policies (Policy 103)** - Muhlenberg School District provides an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs and activities offered in the schools without discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy or handicap/disability.

**Video and Audio Recordings – (Policy 237)** It is prohibited to use electronic devices to take photographs, or to record audio or video at any time during the school day or at any school sponsored event that is not open to the general public. It is also prohibited for students to have any use of electronic devices in locker rooms, bathrooms, and other changing areas.

Muhlenberg School District is equipped with video cameras which record all school property. The images recorded by these cameras may be used by school officials to establish the identity of students, employees, chaperones, or members of the general public involved in unlawful conduct or conduct that is contrary to the rules and regulations of the district and may be used as evidence in any disciplinary proceeding conducted by the school district.

**Internet, Network Resources, and Devices (Policy 815)** - The district provides each student with personal technology devices for educational purposes. Internet and other network resources in the district's instructional and operational programs are provided in order to facilitate learning, teaching and daily operations through interpersonal communications and access to information, research and collaboration.

Students and staff and other authorized individuals have the responsibility to respect and protect the rights of every other user in the district and on the Internet. Users of district networks or district-owned equipment shall, prior to being given access or being issued equipment, sign user agreements acknowledging awareness of the provisions of the policy, and awareness that the district uses monitoring systems to monitor and detect inappropriate use. Network accounts shall be used only by the authorized owner of the account for its approved purpose. Users are expected to act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner in accordance with district policy, administrative regulations, accepted rules of network etiquette, and federal and state law.

Parents/Guardians who do not want their child to have access to the Internet should put the request in writing to the building administrator.

**Electronic Devices (Policy 237)** – Cell phones, smart watches and other electronic devices (gaming systems, iPods, tablets, etc.) may be brought to school, but the use of such items is *prohibited* during school hours.

Cell phones/all electronics to be in the student's backpack turned off from the school door (AM) to school door (PM). Laser pointers and attachments are prohibited. Cell phones and electronic devices must be powered off and kept in students' backpacks while on school grounds during the entire school day.

- First Offense: Students will be asked to turn off the electronic device and put it away in the backpack as policy states.
- Second Offense: Student's electronic device will be stored/held with the homeroom teacher and returned to the student at the end of the school day.
- Three or More Offenses: These cases will be handled by administration on an individual basis however consequences could include the parent/guardian picking up the electronic device, activity restriction, and/or suspension.

Exceptions to phones and devices being turned off while at school are as follows:

- Personal listening devices may be used on school vehicles. Volume must be kept to a minimum level. Inappropriate use of devices or device content may result in loss of this privilege.
- Electronic games may be used on school vehicles. Volume must be kept to a minimum level. Inappropriate use of devices or device content may result in loss of this privilege.
- The Board prohibits the use of electronic devices to take photographs, or to record audio or video at any time during the school day or at any school sponsored event that is not open to the general public.

**Please note that the district shall not be liable for the loss, damage or misuse of any electronic device brought to school by a student.**

**Dress and Grooming (Policy 221)** – Muhlenberg students are expected to dress sensibly and appropriately and be in adherence to the Muhlenberg School District Dress and Grooming Policy (which can be found on the district website). If clothing is inappropriate, the home will be contacted to provide appropriate clothing for the day. It is recommended that girls wear pants or shorts on days when physical education is scheduled. Shorts are permitted during warm weather, but they should be mid-thigh in length and fit properly. Tops containing offensive decals, slogans or advertisements for alcohol and/or drugs are prohibited. Tops should properly cover a student's body. Shirts must cover the midriff. NO open back shoes such as Flip-flops, strapless crocs, slides, and sandals are **NOT** to be worn by students during the school day unless the open-toed shoe has a back-strap to secure the foot. In addition, shoes with wheels are not permitted. Head-wear that is not religious in nature is not allowed to be worn inside of the building with the exception of school-sponsored theme days. This includes, but is not limited to, hats, hoods, scarves, wraps, do-rags, wave caps, etc. While in the school building, hoods should remain down and off of the head. Protective UV attire will be permitted for any outdoor activities.

**Weapons (Policy 218.1)** - Muhlenberg School District prohibits students from possessing and bringing weapons and replicas of weapons into any school district buildings, onto school property, to any school-sponsored activity, and onto any public vehicle providing transportation to school or a school-sponsored activity.

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## Discipline

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**Authority of Teachers, Assistant Principals, and Principals over Pupils** - §13-1317 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code states: *“Every teacher, vice-principal and principal in the public schools shall have the right to exercise the same authority as to conduct and behavior over the pupils attending the school, during the time they are in attendance, including the time required in going to and from their homes, as the parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to such pupils may exercise over them.”*

**Search** (Policy 226) - School officials shall be permitted to conduct a search of a student and/or of items in the student’s possession or within the student’s control if the school official has reasonable grounds for suspecting the search will produce evidence that the student has violated or is violating laws, established rules, regulations, and district policies while on school premises.

It shall be the policy of the Board that all lockers and student storage spaces are and shall remain the property of the school district. As such, students shall have only a limited expectation of privacy in their lockers/storage spaces.

**Student Discipline** (Policy 218) - The Muhlenberg School Board recognizes the need to maintain an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning in schools. A central goal is to help students develop self-discipline. Students share with the administration and faculty a responsibility to develop a climate within the school that encourages a positive learning environment. Students whose behavior disrupts the educational process must receive appropriate attention from teachers, counselors, and administrators.

**Field Trips** - Students will be excluded from field trips and or special events if involved in any Level 3 or Level 4 infraction within the same academic, school-year quarter. The student and family will be contacted prior to the field trip when the child is not permitted to participate in the field trip or special events.

### ***Student Responsibilities***

- A. Attend school and all classes daily, except when excused. Be on time for classes and other school functions.
- B. Pursue and attempt to complete satisfactorily the courses of study prescribed by state and local school authorities.
- C. Arrange to make up work when absent from school.
- D. Respect the rights of other students.
- E. Express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner so as not to offend or slander others.
- F. Respect the rules and authority of teachers, administrators, and all others who are involved in the educational process.
- G. Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct themselves accordingly.
- H. Assume that until a rule is waived, altered, or repealed, it is in effect.
- I. Be aware of and comply with federal, state, and local laws.
- J. Be willing to volunteer information in matters relating to health, safety, and welfare of the school community and the protection of school property.
- K. Dress and groom to meet fair standards of safety and health, and not to cause substantial disruption to the educational process.
- L. Assist the school staff in operating a safe school.
- M. Exercise proper use and care when using public facilities and equipment.
- N. Avoid the use of indecent or obscene language when dealing with other students or school district staff members.

### ***Student Discipline Options***

The following are possible, but not limited to, consequences used to restore, reflect and reinstate positive student conduct:

- A. Parent/guardian contact via telephone
- B. Conference (may include student, parent, school counselor, behavior specialists, teacher(s), administrator)
- C. Restitution demonstrating reflection and growth
- D. Detention (during lunch, recess or after school)
- E. In-school suspension
- F. Out of school suspension
- G. Expulsion (Policy 233)

## *Misconduct Response Structure*

This structure presents a comprehensive series of typical misbehaviors that are classified into four levels and arranged in a continuum according to the seriousness of the act and frequency of its occurrence.

**Level I** - Misbehaviors classified in this level represent relatively minor infraction of established procedures that regulate the orderly operation of the school and its educational process. Due to the nature of their frequency or seriousness, the classroom teacher or other school personnel assume the responsibility for corrective action. The frequency of their occurrence shall determine the appropriate disciplinary response and their re-classification at a higher level.

### *Infractions*

1. Littering
2. Tardiness
3. Not returning required forms
4. Immodest or indecent dress
5. Unprepared with class materials and supplies
6. Non-defiant failure to complete assignments, carry out teacher directions, or adequately prepare for class
7. Abuse of hall, locker, or lavatory privileges
8. Careless or unauthorized use of school property or facilities
9. Disruptive behavior in school, on campus, or on the school bus
10. Cheating or lying

**Level II** - This level includes misbehaviors whose frequency or seriousness tends to disrupt the learning climate of the school and seriously affect the student's own education. Some of these infractions may be the result of a continuation of misbehaviors that remain unmodified by disciplinary actions under Level I. Due to the nature of their frequency or seriousness, the principal assumes the major responsibility for corrective action.

### *Infractions*

1. Unmodified Level I misbehavior
2. Cutting scheduled detention
3. Continual harassment of students
4. Petty theft or gambling
5. Chronic misbehavior
6. Use of profanity, obscenity
7. Possession or distribution of pornographic materials
8. Leaving school without permission
9. Truancy
10. Forgery
11. Defiance and insubordination

**Level III** - These acts are more serious because their consequences may have a lasting effect on the individual or may pose a threat to the health and safety of others in school. While some might be considered criminal acts, for the most part, their redemption can be undertaken through the disciplinary mechanism of the school. In some cases, however, law enforcement officials may be contacted/notified.

### *Infractions*

1. Continuation of Level II misbehavior
2. Chronic truancy
3. Possession of cigarettes, smoking on school property including the bus
4. Organized gambling
5. Stealing
6. Fighting
7. Vandalism
8. Physically threatening other students
9. Possessing, using, or being under the influence of substances (drugs, alcohol) on school property or during school-sponsored activities
10. Serious acts of defiance or threatening a teacher or member of the support staff

**Level IV** - Represented in this level are acts which are clearly criminal. Included are those that present a direct and immediate threat to the welfare of others or may result in violence to persons or property. In most cases, acts on this level are so serious that they require administrative action that calls for the immediate removal of the student from school and police intervention.

***Infractions***

1. Unmodified Level III misbehavior
2. Possession and/or sale of stolen property
3. Extortion of other students
4. Indecent exposure
5. Major vandalism
6. Arson
7. Grand theft
8. Bomb threat
9. Assault and battery
10. Tampering with fire alarm; pulling false alarm
11. Possession and/or use of firecrackers or explosives
12. Providing, selling, using illegal chemical substances and/or alcohol on school property or during school sponsored activities
13. Possession, use, transfer of lethal weapons on school property or during school-sponsored activities

***The foregoing examples of impermissible conduct are not intended to be all-inclusive. At the District's discretion, any violation of the School District's policies or any conduct considered inappropriate or unsatisfactory may subject the student to discipline, including expulsion. The District reserves sole discretion whether to apply progressive discipline in any given situation.***

## School Bus Policies

**School Bus Regulations** - Students having the privilege of riding a school bus must conduct themselves in a quiet and orderly manner to and from school. The bus driver is legally responsible for the safe transportation of students. Students will be permitted to board their school assigned transportation vehicle only. Therefore, our school district's bus discipline code has been written to provide guidelines for drivers and student riders to follow. Students not adhering to the following guidelines may be subjected to suspended bus privileges.

|               | Bus Violation K-6  | Warning | Detention | Bus Suspension |       |       |   |
|---------------|--|---------|-----------|----------------|-------|-------|---|
|               |  |         |           | 1 day          | 2 day | 3 day |   |
| Minor/Level 1 | <b>Behavior, which produces distractions or disturbances, which interfere with the bus driver/bus aide or disrespect the driver/aide.</b><br><i>Examples include, but are not limited to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to remain seated while the bus is in motion</li> <li>• Failure to keep extremities inside the school bus while the bus is parked</li> <li>• Getting on/off the bus at an unassigned stop</li> <li>• Vulgarity, swearing, inappropriate language</li> <li>• Use, consumption, or distribution of food</li> </ul>   | ●       | ●         | ●              | ●     | ●     | ● |
|               |  | ●       | ●         | ●              | ●     | ●     | ● |
| Major/Level 2 | <b>Behavior, which produces severe distractions or disturbances, which cause serious or unsafe conditions and/or repeatedly interfere with the bus driver/aide and present a safety concern for all on board the bus</b><br><i>Examples include, but are not limited to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving around the bus while the bus is in motion</li> <li>• Throwing objects in, around, and/or outside the bus</li> <li>• Standing while the bus is in motion</li> <li>• Sitting in the driver's seat</li> <li>• Failure to keep extremities inside the bus while the bus is in motion</li> <li>• Using flash photography while on the bus</li> </ul> | ●       | ●         | ●              | ●     | ●     | ● |
|               |  | ●       | ●         | ●              | ●     | ●     | ● |

**Any bus misconduct may result in any or all of the following consequences:**

1. **Bus driver verbal warning and seat change.**
2. **Bus driver written warning (bus referral).**
3. **Administrative verbal warning.**
4. **Administrative detention.**
5. **Loss of the privilege to ride the bus for a period of one day or up to the remainder of the school year based on the discretion of building administration and severity of the misconduct.**

We ask parents to read and explain the bus discipline code to their children:

- a) Students shall line up to get on the bus, avoid pushing and shoving, and take assigned seats on the bus immediately upon boarding following the seating procedures.
- b) Students shall not tamper with the bus or any of its equipment.
- c) Students shall observe orderly conduct on the bus and refrain from the use of profane and indecent language.
- d) Students shall not talk with the bus driver while the bus is in motion.
- e) Students shall not board/disembark their bus at other than their assigned stops and shall only ride their regularly assigned school bus.
- f) Students shall not play games on the street or highway while waiting for the school bus, nor shall they trespass or cause damage to any property in the vicinity of the bus stop.
- g) Students shall be on time for the school bus.
- h) Students shall not bring pets to school on the school bus.
- i) Students shall not eat or drink on the school bus.
- j) Students shall cooperate with and obey the school bus driver at all times.
- k) Students shall not deposit any paper or trash on the seats or anywhere else on the bus.
- l) Students shall adhere to the Muhlenberg School District Policy 227 on Controlled Substances/Paraphernalia.
- m) Students shall adhere to the Muhlenberg School District Policy 218.1 on Weapons.
- n) Students shall adhere to the Muhlenberg School District Policy 222 on Tobacco/Nicotine.

**Parents, please remember no adult (parents, family members, and friends) is permitted to board a school bus at any time. We thank you in advance for adhering to this policy.**



**Special Requests Regarding Transportation** - All special requests regarding transportation routes shall be presented in written form by the parent/guardian to the coordinator of buildings, grounds, and transportation five (5) days prior to the effective date of the request. Parents/guardians will be informed as to the resolution of their request by the transportation office. School principals and bus drivers will be notified of any changes to the bus routes by the transportation office. Bus drivers are not permitted to accept requests.

If an emergency situation arises that prevents a five day prior notice, the transportation department can be reached by phone at (610) 921-8000, extension 5532. All calls must be followed up with a written request.

**PLEASE NOTE: All students in grades 1-6 are allowed to depart from their bus with or without parents/guardians present. Kindergarten students will not be dismissed from the bus without a parent/guardian. A kindergarten student will be permitted to depart the bus with an older sibling after the parent/guardian completes and submits the approval to the MEC office.**

**Transportation Video/Audio Recording** (Policy 810.2) - The use of video and audio recording equipment supports efforts to maintain discipline and to ensure the safety and security of all students, staff, contractors and others being transported on district-owned, operated, or contracted school buses or school vehicles.

Access to the camera and tapes will be limited to coordinators and administrators. Tapes will be erased and re-recorded if no incidents occur over a two week schedule. Tapes documenting incidents will be made available to the appropriate school administrators. Taped documentation of misbehavior will be preserved only until the disciplinary action/disposition has been reached. Thereafter, all recorded evidence of misbehavior will be erased.

**Assigned Seats** - Students in grades K-6 have assigned seats. Students must sit in their assigned seats regardless of ridership. There are no exceptions. In coordination with the building administration, seat assignments will change only for reasons pertaining to students' safety.

**Day Care Transportation** - Prior approval is required for day care transportation. All requests are to be made in writing through the transportation office (610-921-8000, extension 5532). Parents/guardians requesting day care transportation must provide the following information:

- Day care provider's name, address, and telephone number
- Dates or period of time change to be in effect
- Child's name, home address, and phone number

**Carrying of Objects on Buses** - The state guidelines for transportation forbid the carrying of any objects on the bus, such as projects and band instruments, unless they can be safely held on the pupil's lap. If large items, such as instruments, projects, or pets are to be brought to school, the parent/guardian will be responsible for transporting that item on the day involved.

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## Curriculum and School Services

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The Muhlenberg School District is committed to guiding all students on a path of excellence with active and purposeful learning experiences, a growing and comprehensive curriculum, collaborative and innovative staff, and creative use of technology and resources coupled with an unrelenting desire for success.

### **Creative Arts**

Classes offered include: Art, Music, Library, Engineering, Physical Education, and Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Each class follows its own respective common core curriculum.

### **MTSS**

Multi-Tiered System of Supports is a systemic, continuous-improvement framework in which data-based problem solving and decision-making is practiced across all levels of the education system for supporting students.

### **Special Education Services**

Students who qualify for special education have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan that is tailored to meet the needs of individual students. It encompasses a range of services that help students with disabilities learn.

- Gifted Education (Policy 114)
- Speech

### **School Psychologist**

School psychologists provide expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior, to help students succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally through observation and evaluation. Parents/Guardians may request an evaluation at any time. The parent/guardian request must be in writing. (Policy 113.3)

### **School Counseling**

School counselors are educators uniquely trained in child development, learning strategies, self- management and social skills, who understand and promote success for a diverse population of students. School counselors implement a research-based program to support students through each developmental stage of their academic career. In addition, school counselors are available to meet with individual students, small groups of students and parents.

### **Behavior Specialist**

Behavior specialists provide a positive behavior support plan developed in coordination with the IEP team and can be based on a functional behavior assessment, and become part of the individual student's IEP including methods that utilize positive reinforcement and techniques to shape a student's behavior.

### **School Social Worker**

The primary responsibility of the school social worker involves helping students to address problems or issues that may get in the way of learning and social emotional competence.

**Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP) (Policy 236)** - ESAP is a systematic process using effective and accountable professional techniques to mobilize school resources to remove the barriers to learning and, when the problem is beyond the scope of the school, to assist the parent/guardian and student with information so they may access services within the community.

## Assessment and Progress Reporting

**Parent-Teacher Conferences** - Scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held in November for students in Kindergarten through grade six. Conferences can also be requested during the school year at times other than those scheduled. Please submit your request in writing and allow 24 hours for a reply correspondence. A translator is available upon request.

**Reporting Student Progress** (Policy 212) - Report cards for students in grades one through three are issued four times a year: November, January, April, and June. Kindergarten report cards are issued in January, April and June. Performance levels may be based on tests, projects, oral response, homework, class work, and other criteria considered by the teachers. Performance based assessments are also used to determine levels of student achievement.

**Promotion and Retention** (Policy 215) - A student shall be promoted when s/he has successfully completed the curriculum requirements and has achieved the academic standards established for the present level, based on the professional judgment of the teachers and the results of assessments. A student shall earn the right to advance to the next grade by demonstrating mastery of the required skills and knowledge.

**Scheduling** – Scheduling students and assigning teachers for the following year is a collaborative and strategic process for each student that involves many different factors. Parent requests will only be considered upon written receipt and only under extenuating circumstances at the discretion of administration.

**Standardized Tests** - Students in grades three through six will participate in benchmark and standardized assessments for reading and mathematics and any testing that is required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as part of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). Fourth grade students will also participate in the science PSSA. Please call your child's school counselor with questions about standardized testing.

**Education Records** (Policy 216) - The school maintains a cumulative record of each student that contains items such as, test scores, report cards, general information on academics and health.

## Health Services

**School Wellness (Policy 246)** - The Muhlenberg School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. A certified school nurse and/or nursing assistant will provide an environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education and promotion, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience.

**Pandemic** - The Muhlenberg School District follows all recommended federal, state and local guidelines in the event of a pandemic or other health crises.

**Illness** - If a child shows signs of illness, do not send him or her to school. Parents will be notified if a child is ill or has a temperature of 100 degrees or above.

Any child displaying an unusual skin eruption, unusual soreness of throat, or having conditions that suggest an infectious condition must be excluded from school until he or she presents evidence from a physician that the condition is not infectious or that recovery has occurred. Some of the more common infectious conditions, which require a note from the doctor before a pupil may return to school, are conjunctivitis or pink eye, impetigo, ringworm, and scabies.

No child will be admitted to school within the prescribed interval for each disease as listed below unless a physician certifies that the child is not suffering from the suspected disease nor any other communicable disease:

- Chicken pox- Until all crusts are dry
- German or regular measles- Six days from onset of rash
- Mumps- Until fever and swelling are subsiding
- Respiratory streptococcal (strep throat, scarlatina, scarlet fever) - If no physician is in attendance, not less than seven days from onset.

**Pediculosis (Head Lice) (Policy 209.2)** - Any child found to be infected with head lice will not be excluded from school as per recommendations from the U.S. Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the PA Department of Health and the National Association for School Nurses.

**Immunization (Policy 203)** - All students shall be immunized against specific diseases in accordance with state law and regulations, unless specifically exempt for religious or medical reasons.

**Medication (Policy 210)** - When medication is to be administered during school hours, the prescribed medication shall be sent to school under the following conditions:

1. A written and signed request from a physician shall detail the name of the drug, the dosage, the time interval that the medication is to be taken and the reason for the medication to be given.
2. The parent/guardian shall sign and confirm the request that the school district comply with the physician's order and sign a waiver releasing the school district, its agents and employees from any and all liability, loss, and claim of whatsoever nature resulting from the administration of the medication to the student and from all illness or injuries which may result there from.
3. If the nurse is to administer the medication, the medication will be held in the health room. It shall be the student's responsibility to go to the health room or to the office at the correct time, and the nurse shall administer the medication.

**Nonprescription Medication (Policy 210)** – Acetaminophen, ibuprofen, antacid, and other over the counter medicines may be administered according to the current standing orders of the school physician if the parent/guardian’s written permission for the current year is on file. Emergency medications and first aid treatment will be administered according to the standing orders of the school physician.

**Health & Dental Examinations/Screening (Policy 209)** - Each student shall receive a comprehensive health examination conducted by the school physician upon original entry, in sixth grade, and in eleventh grade. The school nurse or medical technician shall administer to each student vision tests, hearing tests, other tests deemed advisable, and height and weight measurements, at intervals established by the district.

Each student shall receive a comprehensive dental examination conducted by the school dentist upon original entry, in third grade, and in seventh grade.

A private health and/or dental examination conducted at the parents'/guardians' request and expense shall be accepted in lieu of the school examination. The district shall accept reports of privately conducted physical and dental examinations completed within one (1) year prior to a student’s entry into the grade where an exam is required.

## **Homelessness**

### **ECYEH (PA Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness)**

The Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) is an initiative of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and is based on the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This federal legislation ensures that homeless children and youth have access to a free, appropriate public education.

Children and youth experiencing homelessness have the right to:

- Continue their education in their current school, and receive transportation OR enroll immediately in the school where they are temporarily housed, even if lacking the paperwork normally required
- Receive free lunch
- Receive assistance with school-related expenses such as supplies, clothing, uniforms, etc.

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## **School District Policies**

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All Muhlenberg School District Policies can be located on the district website at [www.muhsdk12.org](http://www.muhsdk12.org) . If you do not have internet access, please contact the school office to request a copy of these and other policies.

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| It is the policy of the Muhlenberg School District not to discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, race, color, and national origin in educational programs, activities or employment as required by Title IX of the 1972 education amendments. Inquiries on Title IX compliance should be directed to the office of the Assistant Superintendent, 801 Bellevue Avenue, Laureldale, PA, 19605, telephone 921-8000 or to the director of the office for civil rights in the department of education, Washington, D.C. |
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## **Pandemic Response**

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Muhlenberg School District follows all guidelines set forth by the Muhlenberg Pandemic Team. The Muhlenberg Pandemic Team is a cross-disciplinary team that makes guidelines for MSD based on further recommendations of the Center for Disease Control, the PA Department of Health and other agencies pertinent to the health and safety of schools, students and staff during the global pandemic of COVID-19.