Merrill Middle School
Parent and Student Handbook

Amy Bringedahl, Principal
Brett Stringer, Assistant Principal

Collaboration, Equity, Community, Accountability
The Merrill Mission and Vision

Mission
Merrill does more to engage, encourage and empower every student to be an independent, critical thinker in a collaborative community.

Vision
Merrill will uphold a culture of excellence that prepares all students for success in college, career and the world around them.

Merrill Values

Collaboration
*We work together using strengths and expertise to achieve excellence through shared responsibility and teamwork.*

Accountability
*We persevere and act with integrity while accepting responsibility for our learning.*

Community
*We believe that by building strong relationships and holding each other to high expectations we achieve team success.*

Equity
*We focus on individual needs with high expectations for all and barriers for none.*
We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to Merrill Middle School for the 2015-2016 school year. We believe we have an excellent school, committed to helping all students reach their full potential.

During the middle school years, your child will undergo many changes as he/she develops and matures into young adulthood. The staff at Merrill is here to help in this process. Please do not hesitate to call us if we can be of assistance.

In order for us to provide an orderly environment where learning takes place, we have established a Code of Conduct with consistent rules enforced throughout the school. For this plan to have its greatest effect, we need your support. We would like to thank you for your cooperation.

Respectfully,

Amy Bringedahl and Brett Stringer

http://www.dpsk12.org/parent_handbook/
General Information

School begins at 7:45 A.M. and ends at 3:35 P.M., Monday through Friday. Students are not to be in the building before 7:38 A.M. unless they have an appointment with a specific teacher. Homeroom will run the first 10 min of class and breakfast will be served during this time. It is the expectation that all students are in their first period class by 7:45 A.M.

The Merrill staff will provide supervision for students from 7:25 – 3:50 each day. Students are not to be on school grounds until 7:25 A.M. and at the end of the school day, all students need to be off school property by 3:50 P.M. Students who are in athletics or an after school activity must report to the appropriate location by 3:50.

Drop Off and Pick Up Areas
Parents who drop off and pick up their students may do so near the corner of Monroe and Iowa. Students are to report to the blacktop and athletic fields in the rear of the building. This is to ensure the safety and supervision of our students. When dropping off or picking up, both parents and students need to exercise caution and safety in order to keep our streets free from accidents. Please refrain from dropping off students on Iowa. This area is intended for staff parking and the Merrill bus drop off.

Merrill Middle School Class Schedule
School Year 2015-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>6th Grade</th>
<th>7th Grade</th>
<th>8th Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7:45 – 9:15</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9:19-10:09</td>
<td>Enrichment/Intervention</td>
<td>Enrichment/Intervention</td>
<td>Enrichment/Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10:13-11:04</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11:08-11:30</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11:34-12:25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12:29-1:19</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Elective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1:23-2:14</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2:18-2:40</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2:44-3:35</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Merrill students will have three academic courses – Language Arts and Math will meet every day. Science and Social Studies will meet on alternate days. All students will have a combination of
elective, enrichment or intervention classes (as needed) each day and once a week they will have an Advisement course. Students will also have a 51 minute lunch period.

## Academic Programming Information

### Teacher and Room Assignments

### 6th Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Lemahieu</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>Ms. Davidson</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>Mrs. Larson</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Hatch</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>Mrs. Mackenzie</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>Ms. Welsh</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Thomas</td>
<td>116/117</td>
<td>Ms. Curran</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>Ms. Mangas</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Tennyson</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>Ms. Miller</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Ms. Shepard</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7th Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Smith</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>Mr. Roberts</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>Ms. Armedariz</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Gerlits</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>Ms. Stelling</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>Ms. Pachan</td>
<td>227A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bergquist</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>Ms. Sanders</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>Mr. Norman</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Garland</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>Ms. Graves</td>
<td>200BB</td>
<td>Ms. Shepard</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Tennyson</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>Ms. Miller</td>
<td>132</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8th Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Woodworth</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>Mr. Saldivar</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>Ms. Giovenga</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Zick</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>Mr. Eustis</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>Mr. Maness</td>
<td>104/223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Sommer</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>Mr. Markowich</td>
<td>104/105</td>
<td>Ms. Pachan</td>
<td>227A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Tennyson</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>Ms. Miller</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Ms. Shepard</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Electives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Thornton</td>
<td>South Gym/222</td>
<td>Ms. Horgan</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>Ms. Dimarzio</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Patterson</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>Mr. Garland</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>Mr. Fairbairn</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Soldner</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>Ms. Chase-Doll</td>
<td>North Gym</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Academic Integrity

**Academic Integrity** is achieved when students, teachers and parents follow an ethical code or standard in learning.

Academic Integrity incorporates:
• Trust: The reassurance that real learning can be achieved by all and struggle and even failure may be a part of this process.
• Fairness: The path to learning success is evinced by specific assessment standards systematically applied to all students.
• Respect: The acknowledgement of the participatory part of learning and the acceptance of others’ perspectives.
• Responsibility: The act of being personally accountable for taking action when a breach of Academic Integrity occurs.

Advice for Parents and Students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advice for Parents</th>
<th>Advice for Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Discuss the concept of Academic Integrity before the school year begins.</td>
<td>- Accept academic struggle and failure; learn from these opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Encourage your student to focus on his/her learning, not his/her grades.</td>
<td>- Don't be afraid to ask for help. It is impossible to know and understand everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Explain concepts but let your student do the work.</td>
<td>- Try all your homework. If you don’t understand it, formulate good questions for your teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Review completed homework every night.</td>
<td>- Understand when you can share information with your peers and when you cannot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Encourage your student to seek help if needed.</td>
<td>- Don't give into cheating peer pressure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Respect and reward good effort.</td>
<td>- Report cheating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Give consequences at home for Academic Dishonesty.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standards Based Report Cards and Academic Progress Reports

Each grading period is 18 weeks for the semester and 9 weeks for the quarter. At the end of each quarter, Progress Reports will be sent home indicating a students’ progress toward the academic standards in each subject area. A final report card will be issued at the end of the school year and you will receive a letter indicating your mastery of each standard.

A = Advanced
P = Proficient
Mid-term Progress Reports are issued **once every 6 weeks** to inform parents of grades and classroom behaviors.

Report cards are kept in the main office at the end of the year if you owe library fines or school fees. Unpaid fees also affect participation in the 8th grade Elitch Garden celebration and the Continuation ceremony. Please note that all fees carry forward to each grade level until they are paid in full, including high school.

**Current Student Grades and Parent Portal**
Parents and students can access the current grades and assignments through the Parent Portal on the school website [http://merrill.dpsk12.org/](http://merrill.dpsk12.org/). The Parent Portal provides parents and students with a view of the teacher grade book and attendance records. This is a highly useful tool that provides a constant flow of information on a student’s progress. Parents can request their own passwords through the main office.

**Student Fees, Fines, and Charges**

The Denver Public School Board recognizes the need for student fees to fund certain school activities. It also recognizes that some students may not be able to pay these fees. **No student will be denied access into any program because of an inability to pay these supplementary charges.**

Students who are free and reduced lunch may be exempt from paying fees; however, all students are expected to pay charges for lost, stolen and damaged books, locks, materials, supplies and equipment.

Any fee or charge due to any school in the district and not paid at the end of the school year will be carried forward to the next school year, as such debts are considered to be debts of the student to the District and not to a particular school.

**Athletics and Activities**

**Middle Level Eligibility Policy:**
It must be understood by players and their parents that participation in the Nuggets/Avalanche Prep League, as in high school sports, is a privilege and not a right. The principal, the coach, and the League Manager collaboratively are responsible for determining which students may participate in the Nuggets/Avalanche Prep League.

Students who, due to poor attendance or misbehavior, are attending an alternative program at one of our middle schools are not eligible to participate in the Nuggets/Avalanche Prep League.
Otherwise, participation in the Nuggets/Avalanche Prep League will be open to all students attending any of the district’s 32 middle schools and or K-8 Schools. Furthermore, students that live in the city of Denver but attend a school other than a DPS school, whether it be private, charter, or home school, are allowed to try-out for what would be their home school’s team. Finally, charter schools that desire admission to the Nuggets/Avalanche Prep League shall agree to all items in a Memorandum of Understanding that describe the relationship between the charter school and the League.

The Board advocates full participation at each school. It is also understood that while the Nuggets/Avalanche Prep League Manager will provide assistance as possible to secure coaches when a school cannot provide one, it is ultimately the responsibility of the principal at each school to provide a coach for each sport.

Students may only compete for their school of attendance or, in the event their school of attendance does not offer a sports program, their home school unless the Board has approved an athletic waiver for participation. The Board member from the school at which the athlete wishes to compete must submit waiver requests in writing. Waivers will only be granted in the presence of hardship.

**Daily Participation**

All participants must attend school or have verification from a parent or guardian for any partial absence in order to participate in a league contest. Eligibility for participation in practice on the day of an absence will be decided by the school principal. If a student is suspended for any reason, the student may not be able eligible for that week’s game(s).

**Eligibility**

All of our athletes are students first and athletes second. Student athletes must maintain their eligibility on a weekly basis to practice and participate in team games. Student athletes are responsible for bringing their signed eligibility progress reports to their coaches regarding the three standards of “Characteristics of a Successful Learner.” If a student athlete has one or more “1” on the grading scale, they will not be able to participate in the following weeks’ game(s).

**Characteristics of a Successful Learner:**
1. Student completes class work
2. Student completes homework
3. Student follows school and class rules

The Athletic Director (Vince Franklin) at the school will make the determination of eligibility for their school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Sports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Athletic Fees:
Participation in any of these sports teams will require a sports physical from a licensed physician (please see the DPS Athletics website for detailed info re: physicals and forms) and paying a participation fee of $25 per sport. If/when a team reaches the playoffs; at least 80% of the athletes need to have paid the athletic fee in order for the school to be able to participate. The $25 athletic fee is due prior to you getting your uniform for your sport. If you do not turn in your $25 athletic fee, you will not be able to participate.

Activity Fees:
As much as school is about academics, it is also about the social interactions we have with those around us.

We have many events throughout the year that celebrate the students’ hard work. These small events help us to maintain the culture of growth and recognition that we strive for at Merrill.

In order to provide the students with these opportunities, we will collect a $5 Student Activities Fee at the beginning of the year during registration. This $5 goes towards events like after school socials, positive behavior rewards, International Festival and many other student sponsored events that arise throughout the year.

Your support for these activities is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Student Services

Student Support Services
There are times when students have difficulty coping with school, home, or the social environment which may impact their school performance. Students have access to the following resources:

Jennifer McDonough  Psychologist
Karen Pepper  Social Worker
Emily Barlow  Guidance Counselor
Health Services

Emergency Accident Procedures
If an accident or emergency involving a student occurs at school, the following procedures are followed:

• The supervising staff member either brings the student to the Clinic immediately or, in the case of serious injury, contacts the Main Office, via the building intercom system.
• The appropriate Main Office personnel will check the injured student and determines if first aid can be given (minor injuries) or if the paramedics should be contacted.
• First aid treatment is administered and/or the paramedics are contacted. If the paramedics are contacted, they take full charge of the situation and make all decisions, such as, hospital transport, first aid, etc.
• The injured student’s parents are contacted by telephone.
• A building accident report is completed and filed.

Illness and Accidents
Students who get sick during the school day are required to get a pass from their teacher and check into the Clinic with the school nurse. No student may enter the Clinic without a pass. At that time, parents will be contacted by telephone to excuse the absence and/or to take the student home. **Students need to report accidents that occur during the school day to the Clinic. The involved parties will complete an accident report form.**

Ambulance Expense
Any expenses incurred by emergency use of an ambulance will not be borne by the School District. This means expenses will have to be covered by the parents or guardians of those students involved. This can be accomplished by a simple rider on your health insurance policy to cover ambulance transportation. It should be noted that parents or guardians of the injured student will be notified before an ambulance is called unless the injury requires immediate emergency transportation of the injured student.

Dispensing Medications to Students
The Merrill Clinic dispenses medication for chronic health conditions or short-term acute health conditions only. Medication cannot be given to students without written consent from the student’s physician and parents. A new consent form needs to be filled out every year.

Medications, including over-the-counter pain relievers, cough syrup, cough drops, inhalers, etc., shall be administered by the nurse or nurse’s designee, only with written orders of a physician and written parent permission.

Library Media Center
Hours
The library media center (LMC) is open Monday – Friday from 7:45 A.M. to 3:35 P.M

Borrowing Procedures
1. Student picture identification (ID) cards are issued at the beginning of the school year. ID cards must be used to check out materials
2. Students may check out most LMC materials for a three-week time period using their student ID cards. Items may be renewed for one additional three-week period unless another student or staff member has requested it.
3. Students may have up to six (6) items checked out at one time.

Overdue Materials
1. LMC materials become overdue on the day after the loan period ends.
2. Students with overdue materials will receive an individual notice. Overdue notices are distributed weekly to homeroom teachers.
3. Students must pay for damaged or lost library materials in their possession. If damage is apparent at the time materials are checked out, the student should report the damage at that time.
4. Students with overdue LMC materials or unresolved damaged or lost book charges will forfeit their borrowing privileges until these overdue materials are returned and/or all charges are paid. Report cards of students with overdue materials and/or unpaid charges will be held at the end of each trimester until all materials are returned or charges are resolved.
5. Students who have overdue materials and/or unpaid charges will not be allowed to attend Merrill social activities (dances, reward activities, etc.)

Lost and Found
Small and valuable lost and found items are held in the main office. All other lost and found is in the back of the cafeteria. If lost items are not claimed within a reasonable length of time, they are sent to a local social service agency.

Lunch
Hot lunches and numerous ala carte items are served at Merrill every day. Menus are posted in the cafeteria every month and also posted on the district food services website (http://enterprisemanagement.dpsk12.org/food-services/menu/). Milk and other beverages can be purchased in the cafeteria each day.

Notice to all who purchase meals from the cafeteria:
Permanent Student ID numbers are used to access computerized student accounts in the school cafeteria.
The Permanent Student ID Number can be found on the student school schedule or students can come to the main office before school begins in the morning to get their number.

Students will need to have money in their account or money in hand to purchase lunches. **Food service can no longer allow students to charge their lunches and pay later.** When their accounts begin to get low, they will need to bring in another check so they maintain a positive balance.

Incoming sixth graders will use the same ID number for lunches at Merrill as they used in their elementary schools.

How the computerized lunch system works:

1. Students who qualify for free meals must present their Permanent Student ID Number, whenever they receive a full meal.
2. Students who qualify for reduced meals can prepay for the meals or pay cash at the time of the meal but must always give their Permanent Student ID Number whenever they receive a full meal.
3. Prepaying students can have payments credited to their accounts for full meals and/or ala carte/snack items.

**Student Deliveries**

Late homework or other classroom materials that parents deliver to the school will be placed in a basket in the Main Office and the students will need to pick them up during a break in the class.

Lunches delivered to school will be placed in a basket in the Main Office and the student will be notified to pick up their lunch.

**Student Messages**

If it becomes necessary for a parent or guardian to contact a student, the procedures at Merrill are:

1. Only emergency messages will be delivered to the student immediately.
2. Other messages will be delivered in a timely manner. We do not interrupt classes for routine messages. Should it be necessary for the student to call the parent or guardian, this will be done during lunches.
3. Students with a hall pass from their teacher can use the telephone in the Main Office.
4. All messages for students must be given to the Main Office prior to 3:00 pm. Messages left after 3:00 pm may not be delivered before the end of the school day.

We ask that you refrain from texting or calling your student on their cell phones during the instructional day. All messages can be delivered to your student by members of our staff. Students receiving texts or calls during class is a disruption to the learning environment.

**Thefts: Reporting a Loss or Theft**
Students are reminded to secure bicycles and lockers, because the school does not accept responsibility for personal articles and property in case of theft.

Students who lose or have reason to believe their personal property or schoolbooks have been stolen/vandalized are advised to fill out a student statement with a member of our student support team. Filing this report will assist the school and the police should their involvement be warranted in retrieving the lost property or in assessing property restitution.

**NOTE:** The school cannot take responsibility for your personal belongings. Please exercise care in what you bring to school and where you leave it. Some suggestions are:
- Leave your valuables at home!
- Bags and purses should be locked in lockers.
- Do not carry large sums of money to school!
- Mark physical education clothes, coats, sweaters, etc., with your name.

### School Rules and Policies

#### Attendance, Truant, and Tardy Policy

Students who desire to obtain the greatest benefit from education recognize that regular attendance and participation in classes are essential. **Frequent absence of students from regular classroom learning experiences disrupts the continuity of the instructional process. One missed day of school results in 435 minutes of lost instruction.**

It is the Merrill expectation that all students are in attendance 95% of school days. Students whose absences exceed 95% will be required to make up lost instructional time in Saturday School as assigned by the Assistant Principal or Principal.

In accordance with Colorado law, every child who has attained the age of seven (7) years and is under the age of sixteen (16) shall attend school for the amount of time prescribed by Colorado Statute 223104 during each school year, except as the student may be excused from attendance in accordance with state statutes.

#### Reporting Absences

If a student is absent due to illness or family emergency, the parent/guardian should call the attendance number and inform the school of the reason for the absence. Students may not call in an absence. If the parent/guardian does not call in, the school will call the student’s family to inform them of the absence. The attendance hotline is (720) 424-0600

#### Excused Absences

*The principal, or designee, shall determine whether individual student absences are excused or unexcused.* Generally, an excused absence is one where the parent or legal guardian communicates with the school about the absence within a specified period of time (48 hours), and the absence is for illness, family emergency, medical or legal appointments, special family
trips, religious observances or official school business. **When students are absent for less than a full day, they are required to sign in and out at the Attendance Office.**

**Unexcused Absences**
An unexcused absence, which may be from a single class or multiple classes, is one that the school does not approve. Examples of absences which are unexcused include babysitting, oversleeping, working, missing the bus or ride, “ditch days,” or being gone ten minutes or more from an assigned class. An absence, not properly reported by the parent or guardian, is unexcused unless circumstances warrant otherwise. Provisions of the Colorado Compulsory Attendance Law shall be carried out for students under 16 years of age in violation of the law (CRS 223107 and 109).

**Partial Day Absence**
When students need to be excused early, for any reason, they must obtain a partial day absence pass before leaving the building. Unless accompanied by a parent or guardian, the student must bring a note from home asking to be excused at a particular time, stating the reason for leaving and the approximate time of return. This note must be brought to the main office before the student goes to his or her first class. Partial day absence requests must have a parent/guardian signature and phone number where the parent can be reached.

**Truancy Policy**
A student is truant if absent from class without permission, including any unexcused tardy of more than five minutes. Truancy is a negative, uncooperative action that is a serious violation of school expectations. A truant student is referred to the Student Advisor for determination of the appropriate consequence, which could include ISIR, Saturday School or out of school suspension. In accordance with the School Attendance Law, all students under 17 who do not attend school will face court proceedings.

**Tardy Policy**
Students are expected to attend all class sessions on time. Tardiness disrupts the learning process and interferes with the opportunity for students to learn. Students have four minutes to move from one class to another. Students who are more than ten minutes tardy will be marked truant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tardiness</th>
<th>1st Tardy:</th>
<th>2nd Tardy:</th>
<th>3rd Tardy:</th>
<th>4th + Tardy:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Tardy cycle begins each quarter.</em></td>
<td>Warning and RA dialogue with teacher.</td>
<td>Call home. Teacher assigned Lunch Detention.</td>
<td>Call home. Teacher assigned After School Detention.</td>
<td>IC discipline referral, Parent Conference and 2 days After School Detention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**First Period Excused Tardies**
Generally, an excused tardy is one where the parent, legal guardian, or school staff member communicates with the Main Office about tardiness within a 24-hour period, and the tardiness is for family emergency, medical or court appointment, official school business or religious observances. All other tardies will be listed as unexcused.

The teacher, counselor and/or administrator will work with tardy students to:
1. Discuss the impact of tardiness on the educational process.
2. Explore the reason for the tardies.
3. Point out the consequences of further tardies.
4. Identify how to avoid further tardies.

**Tardies after 1st Period**

To be prompt is to be in class on time every period. A student is excused if he or she has a planner/pass signed by a teacher or other school staff member. The excused student gives the planner/pass to the teacher, sits down and begins class.

A student is unexcused if there is no pass. A student’s tardy will not interrupt an entire class. When the teacher is ready, he or she will consult with the student about the reason for the unexcused tardy and the consequences. An unexcused tardy is entered into the student’s attendance record.

**Student Dismissal Precautions**

A student shall not be permitted to leave school during the school day in the custody of a person other than the student’s parent or legal guardian unless that person has the authorization of one of the parents or legal guardians and can identify himself/herself. In all cases, approval of the principal or the person in charge must be obtained. The principal shall verify the authorization.

Students of estranged parents shall be released only upon the request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible and who is the parent or guardian registered on the school record. The principal, or designee, may require presentation of the appropriate court document for verification purposes. Once students come onto the campus, they are to remain until they are dismissed at 3:35 P.M.

**Makeup Work After Absences**

**Excused Absences**

For excused absences that are unanticipated, such as for illness, family emergencies, accidents, a student will be able to make up the work missed when he/she returns to school. For each day or period of such excused absence from a class, the student will be allowed one day to complete makeup assignments (not to exceed five school days). For example, if a student has been absent (excused) for three days, he/she will be allowed three school days upon his/her return to school to complete work. If a student has been absent for six days, he/she will have a maximum of five school days to complete work.
Request for Make-up Work During an Illness:
It is the school’s first recommendation that students who are seriously ill be allowed to recover from their illnesses before attempting to complete any schoolwork. They should wait until they return to school to speak with their teachers about make-up plans. To assist parents in this process, we have outlined the Merrill’s Homework Request Procedure below:

- A student **must** be absent three or more consecutive days before a parent can request homework to be sent home. Additional work may be requested after the make-up work is turned in and evaluated.
- Parents then call the Main Office before 9 a.m. on the **third day** of the absence and request that assignments be collected.
- Parents should then pick up the collected assignments that same day after 3 p.m. in the Main Office.

Excused Absences: Suspension
Students who have excused absences due to suspensions will be responsible for all class work and assignments missed. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate requests for makeup work. It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide makeup work. All work, including tests, must be made up and submitted to the classroom instructor within **five school days** of the student’s first day in school following suspension.

A grade of “0” will be recorded for any work not made up and submitted within the five school days.

Prearranged Absences: Excused Absences That Are Planned in Advance; i.e., Religious Observances and Family Vacations
We believe it is important for students to be in school every day, and we request that parents schedule vacations during the regular student vacation days. We also realize that there are times when a family must be gone during the school week. While it is possible for a student to make up some of the missed assignments, it is not possible to replicate the exact classroom situation and, therefore, some of the learning may be lost. Parents who wish to take their child out of school for a known period of time, must complete the Prearranged Absence Form and receive approval from the Principal.

Since the type of work being done during the absence will vary, it will be the teacher’s decision whether to give assignments in advance or to meet with the student when the student returns.

To notify the school of absences planned in advance and to arrange for homework, complete the following steps at least three days prior to the absence:

1. Students submit a note from their parents to the Main Office, indicating the dates and reason for the absence(s).
2. Parents complete the Prearranged Absence Form from the Main Office and the student takes it to each of their teachers. Each teacher will determine if the assignments will be given in advance or will be made up when the students return.
3. Students take the form to the Main Office for copying and then take the original form home.

Bicycles/Skateboards/Scooters

All bikes brought to school must be locked and stored in the fenced bicycle rack area. Bicycle riders should walk bikes while on campus and observe regular traffic rules and regulations.

Skateboards/scooters may not be ridden on school grounds and must be stored in lockers during the school day.

Bus Conduct

Riding a school bus is a privilege that includes four expectations:

1. Stay seated while the bus is moving.
2. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
3. Keep noise at a safe level at all times.
4. Follow the rules of each individual bus driver.

Any disobedience or disruption results in disciplinary action. Failure to uphold these responsibilities results in a bus referral submitted by the driver to the student advisor. After a conference with the student advisor, bus privileges may be revoked for a week. The student will still be required to attend school.

Student Code of Conduct

The goal of education is the total development and enhancement of a student’s intellectual, social/emotional, and physical growth. In order for teaching and learning to occur, we believe students have a right to an uninterrupted education in a productive, challenging, and stimulating atmosphere. Student actions, as individuals or groups, must not interfere with this right. As such, students are expected to behave responsibly and respectfully. Teachers are expected to provide students with clear expectations, teach and model those expectations, and arrange for consistent consequences.

We believe in providing an environment based on respect of self, others, and property. Maintaining this environment where discipline is the shared responsibility of the school, home, community, and student is our major concern.

When in the classroom and on school grounds, students must comply with the following guidelines:

Students Who Act Responsibly:

- Practice academic integrity.
➢ Arrive at assigned seat on time.
➢ Bring required materials to class.
➢ Follow directions the first time they are given.

Students Who Act Respectfully:
➢ Keep hands, feet and objects to themselves.
➢ Strive to be polite and thoughtful in all interactions with others.
➢ Refrain from chewing gum.

Students Who Follow Rules of Safety:
➢ Adhere to building and grounds safety rules.

When a student’s behavior requires disciplinary action, the referral ladder is implemented (Appendix A). Actions are followed sequentially and records are kept of the actions taken. Depending on the severity of the event, the students’ intervention could elevate to a higher level!

The following are possible interventions that may be used to correct poor student behavior:

Lunch Detention
Lunch detention will be issued for students who misbehave and/or are tardy to class. Both teachers and administrators can give a student lunch detention.

Parent Conference and Behavior Contracts:
Teachers will be required to make contact with a student’s parent when poor behavior results in classroom disruptions. In the event that this contact does not remedy the problem the parent will be required to come to the school for a conference with the appropriate school designee. At this conference a behavior plan or contract will be developed.

In School Intervention:
Students may be assigned to In School Intervention Room (ISIR). If a student is assigned to ISIR, the student must follow all rules of ISIR and follow all directions. If a student fails to do this the student will be suspended from school. A parent conference will be required to return to school.

Out of School Suspension:
If a student is suspended from school, they may not be on Denver Public School Property or participate in any DPS event during the suspension, regardless of where the event is held. If a student is suspended a day before a holiday or before a weekend the suspension will run until the beginning of the next school day. A minimum three (3) day suspension shall be mandatory for any student who:

• Intentionally, willfully, or recklessly causes damage to the property or injury to the person of any school employee;
• Engages in an assault upon, disorderly conduct toward, harassment of, or criminal conduct toward a school employee;
Physical altercations are automatic out of school suspensions. 
A parent conference will be required to return to school.

**Administrative Discipline: Inappropriate Student Behaviors**
The Merrill administrative staff deals with inappropriate student behaviors that include, but are not limited to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect / Defiance / Non-compliance / Insubordination</td>
<td>Any behavior, activity, or action deliberately undermining any school personnel's authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting / Physical Aggression</td>
<td>Any physical blow causing or attempting to cause bodily harm such as hitting, slapping, pushing, shoving, for any reason. This action extends to students who instigate fights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abusive / Inappropriate Language</td>
<td>Any use of words, phrases, language or gestures that are sexual and/or derogatory in nature or inappropriate for the school environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment / Bullying Inappropriate</td>
<td>Inappropriate comments and or unwanted verbal, physical, or emotional advances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruption</td>
<td>Any behavior, action, or disturbance that interrupts the teaching or learning process that does not cause physical harm or injury to oneself or others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tardy</td>
<td>Tardy: when the student is not in the classroom when the bell rings and/or on time; If a student is more than 5 minutes late then the student is truant; Tardy if student returns to locker for materials after coming to class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>Truancy: Deliberate failure to attend class; more than 5 minutes tardy for class; an absence for an entire school day, a major portion of the school day, or activity during the school day for which the student is scheduled without appropriate permission or documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate Display of Affection</td>
<td>Any public displays of inappropriate contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress Code Violation</td>
<td>Clothing or accessories that are disruptive to the learning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Violation</td>
<td>Technology use that is not in support of education and research and is not consistent with the education objectives of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to do Assigned Discipline</td>
<td>Failure to do any assigned discipline for any misbehavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Dishonesty</td>
<td>Any deliberate attempt to gain an unfair academic advantage. Includes: Plagiarism, cheating, aiding other students in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table of Disciplinary Offenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Dishonesty, falsifying</td>
<td>Academic Dishonesty, falsifying records, forgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>records, forgery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>Stealing school or personal property from faculty, school employees, or other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism / Property Damage</td>
<td>An intentional action that damages school property. Students / guardians will be required to pay for damages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use / Possession of Weapons</td>
<td>Carrying, bringing, using or possessing a dangerous weapon in any school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle, or at any school sponsored activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bomb Threat / False Alarm</td>
<td>Bomb Threat: Any communicated threat to bomb any school facility / property. False Alarm: Pulling a fire alarm without legitimate reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use / Possession of Drugs/Alcohol /</td>
<td>Possession and or use of or being under the influence of illegal drugs; possession of drug paraphernalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tobacco and / or tobacco paraphernalia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Confiscated items and those not permitted at school, such as laser pens, cellular phones, cd players, iPods, cameras, electronic games, permanent markers and/or any other item that disrupts the learning environment will be given to the student advisor. Parents may pick up any such items at their convenience. **Staff will not investigate the theft or loss of these items.**

### Dress Code

Merrill Middle School strives to maintain an environment that is safe for all students and is conducive to learning. The purpose of the Merrill dress code is to create a professional, safe and respectful environment. Student attire is an outward indication of one’s desire for success and as such, Merrill has developed a Dress Code within District guidelines to support a safe, disruption-free, appropriate learning environment for all. All students will dress in proper attire while on campus or attending field trips. It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure compliance with the dress code. **Students who do not dress accordingly will be required to contact their parents to obtain a change of clothes.** Below are guidelines for the Merrill Dress Code:

### Standard Daily Dress Code

**All clothing and Accessories may not:**

- Be profane, obscene, lewd, suggestive, libelous, or vulgar
- Denote gang involvement
- Promote the use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, or weapons
- Intimidate or threaten any individual or group
- Be form fitting or revealing (sheer, tight, short, or low-cut)
- Disrupt the learning environment
- Promote any activity prohibited by the student code of conduct
In Addition:
All TOPS must have a sleeve – **Unacceptable Tops** include, but are not limited to:
- Strapless tops, tank tops, muscle shirts and tops with spaghetti straps
- Low cut shirts that do not cover the chests, backs, midriffs
- See-through shirts and blouses
- Any clothing that reveals bra straps
- Tight, provocative or distracting clothing

All PANTS must fit at the waist (sagging is not allowed). Shorts, skirts and skorts must be at least 2 inches below fingers with arms hanging at sides - even if tights or leggings are worn underneath. **Unacceptable pants** include but are not limited to:
- Skintight pants
- Leggings cannot be worn in place of pants. They may only be worn underneath skirts of the appropriate length.
- Pajama style pants
- Sweatpants
- Pants that are torn or ripped

Other Clothing / Items
- Hats, caps, scarves and do-rags may not be worn at any time during the school day and should be put in lockers upon arrival at school
- Hajabs are allowed
- Bandanas as apparel and/or accessories may not be worn or displayed at any time.
- Appropriate shoes must be worn at all times in the building and may not constitute a hazard for the students (no bedroom slippers or very high heels)
- Coats
  - All heavy jackets/coats must be put in lockers upon arrival to school
  - Thin/lightweight jackets/vests for warmth may be worn and must be of waist length.
- Jewelry and accessories are acceptable (but no chains, dog collars, spiked items, and otherwise potentially dangerous items.)
- Long key chains worn around the neck or waist are not acceptable
- No two or more people dressing alike for the purposes of intimidation
- No backpacks (including string bags) are allowed in any classrooms during the school day.

*The Merrill Administration reserves the right to determine if any clothing is inappropriate and change dress code as deemed necessary.*
If clothing or accessories are inappropriate, disruptive, or outside of the dress code, students will be asked to change, parents will be contacted and/or other disciplinary consequences will be enforced.

**Hall Passes**

Students are expected to anticipate their needs and to plan ahead. In general, hall passes will not be written for students to take care of needs which should have been addressed before or after school, during passing periods or during lunch. NO bathroom or water passes will be written for the first 10 minutes or the last 10 minutes of class. Emergency exceptions may be made for a pressing personal need at the discretion of the teacher, on a case by case basis.

Passes will be written at the request of school staff, or if a teacher holds a student after class for a conference. All passes must be written in the student planner.

Students out of class without a pass will be considered truant.

**Homework**

Homework is a very important part of the learning process and as such it is the expectation that all homework is completed. Students who are unable to complete homework will be assigned to a tutorial during their enrichment period. The homework will reinforce skills learned in the classroom and help students build skills and proficiency. Merrill Middle School students will have homework a minimum of 5 nights per week. Students should spend between 60 and 90 minutes an evening to complete homework.

**Lockers**

School Lockers are a privilege, not a right. We expect that students treat their lockers with respect and honor. The following rules for lockers are in place:

1. 6th and 7th graders are not to share their lockers/locker combinations with any other student.
2. 8th graders are to only share their lockers/locker combinations with their locker partner.
3. Lockers are the property of the school and shall not be damaged in anyway. Examples of damage include but are not limited to:
   a. Writing inside or outside of the locker
   b. Using glue in or on the locker
   c. Jamming the lock
   d. Damaging resulting from the locker being kicked our hit

If these rules are broken, students can have their locker privileges taken away for an undetermined amount of time and will be assessed a fee for the damage.
Items of value (including, but not limited to, cell phones, mp3 players and other electronics) should NOT be stored in lockers. The school is not responsible for lost, misplaced, or stolen items.

**Snacks and Beverages**

Candy, beverages, or any food items are allowed only inside the lunchroom during the school day. Students are not to bring any caffeinated energy drinks or soda in the school. Students may have a bottle of water in class.

**Technology Standards**

We are very fortunate to have computer labs. It is important for students to understand their rights and responsibilities while using the computers.

Acceptable and Appropriate Use:
- Computers can only be used for academic purposes.
- You are responsible for any computer you use.
- Computer icons and programs cannot be changed.
- Go into your accounts only.
- Use the Internet only with the permission of the teacher. When you use the Internet, you may visit only sites that the teacher assigns.
- Use Merrill Technologies responsibly.
- Abide by copyright laws. Copyright infringement and plagiarism occur when an individual reproduces a work that is protected by a copyright without permission of the copyright holder.
- Be responsible and safe regarding all personal information. Do not provide your name, address, phone number or other personal information to anyone on the Internet.
- You must have permission before using email.
- You must be a good digicitizen. Be polite and use appropriate language.
- Cyber bullying and other electronic harassments will not be tolerated and will have severe consequences.

**Telephone Policy**

Students are not allowed to talk or text on their cellular telephones during the school day. If a student needs to contact a parent or a parent needs to contact a student they must do so through the main office. A secretary, school nurse, counselor, teacher or an administrator may permit students to use office phones. Parents, please be aware: telephone messages will be given to students only in extreme emergencies.

**Visitor Policy**
Security at Merrill Middle School is a primary concern. We have instituted a visitor policy to assure the safety of all students and staff at Merrill. We appreciate your compliance with these expectations. All visitors must check in at the main office.

**Student Visitors**

In order to provide a safe learning environment for our students and staff and to maintain high standards for classroom instruction, Merrill **does not allow student visitation during school hours**. Loitering on a school campus is prohibited by law and unauthorized visitors will be asked to leave or may be removed by the Denver Police Department.

**Adult Visitors**

Merrill welcomes adult visitors and ask that all adults report to the Main Office and secure an adult visitor pass before heading to their destination. We also ask adults to limit their visit time and to safeguard classroom instruction.