

Merrill Middle School Parent and Student Handbook

Christina Sylvester, Principal
Courtney Wickham, Assistant Principal
Vince Franklin, Dean of Culture



Student Handbook

Dear Parents:

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to Merrill Middle School for the 2017-2018 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,

Christina Sylvester

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

General Information

School begins at **7:45 A.M.** and ends at **3:00 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 12 minutes of class and breakfast will be served during this time; students are expected to also engage in independent reading. 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 **7:30 A.M. – 3:15 P.M.** each day. **Students are not to be on school grounds until 7:30 A.M., and at the end of the school day, all students need to be off school property by 3:15 P.M.** Students who are in athletics or an after school activity must report to the appropriate location by **3:05 P.M.**

Drop Off and Pick Up Areas

Parents who transport their students to and/or from Merrill may drop off and pick up their children on Monroe. Before school, 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. It is imperative that Merrill families adhere to this plan per the Merrill-C3-Cory Shared Campus Plan that can be accessed [here](#).

17-18 Bell Schedule

Sixth Grade

| | | |
|---------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| 7:45 – 9:13 | Period 1/2 | Core 1 |
| 9:16 – 10:32 | Period 3/4 | Core 2 |
| 10:35 – 11:24 | Period 5 | Elective |
| 11:27 – 12:16 | Period 6 | Lunch |
| 12:19 – 1:35 | Period 7/8 | Core 3 |
| 1:38 – 2:27 | Period 9 | Elective |
| 2:30 – 3:00 | Period 10 | Enrichment (M/W/F) Advisement (T/TH) |

Seventh Grade

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| 7:45 – 9:13 | Period 1/2 | Core 1 |
| 9:16 – 10:05 | Period 3 | Elective |
| 10:08 – 11:24 | Period 4/5 | Core 2 |
| 11:27 – 12:16 | Period 6 | Core 2 |
| 12:19 – 1:08 | Period 7 | Lunch |
| 1:11 – 2:27 | Period 7 – 8 | Core 3 |
| 2:30 – 3:00 | Period 10 | Enrichment (M/W/F) Advisement (T/TH) |

Eighth Grade

| | | |
|---------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| 7:45 – 8:46 | Period 1 | Elective |
| 8:49 – 10:05 | Period 2/3 | Core 1 |
| 10:08 – 11:24 | Period 4/5 | Core 2 |
| 11:27– 12:16 | Period 6 | Elective |
| 12:19 – 1:08 | Period 7 | Lunch |
| 1:11 – 2:27 | Period 8/9 | Core 3 |
| 2:30 – 3:00 | Period 10 | Enrichment (M/W/F) Advisement (T/TH) |

Merrill students will have three academic courses – Language Arts and Math will meet every day, and 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 twice a week they will have an Advisement course. Students will also have a 49 minute lunch period.

School Supplies

- one – 2 or 2.5 inch 3 ring binder (recommended with zipper)
- one–1 inch 3 ring binder
- additional 1 inch 3 ring binder for Spanish and ELD students
- four – 3-subject spiral notebooks (at least 100 pages each)
- three– sets of five – tab dividers
- three–packs of lined loose leaf notebook paper
- one– pack of graph paper
- two–packs of sticky notes
- three – highlighters of different colors
- twelve – blue or black pens
- twelve – pencils
- two–glue sticks
- one–pencil pouch with zipper
- one–set of colored pencils
- two–boxes of tissues
- one–basic (four function) calculator for *6th graders*
- one–scientific calculator for *7th/8th graders*

Please bring all supplies on the first day of school.

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: | |
|---|---|
| Advice for Parents | Advice for Students |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss the concept of Academic Integrity before the school year begins. - Encourage your student to focus on his/her learning, not his/her grades. - Explain concepts but let your student do the work. - Review completed homework every night. - Encourage your student to seek help if needed. - Respect and reward good effort. - Give consequences at home for Academic Dishonesty. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accept academic struggle and failure; learn from these opportunities. - Don't be afraid to ask for help. It is impossible to know and understand everything. - Try all your homework. If you don't understand it, formulate good questions for your teacher. - Understand when you can share information with your peers and when you cannot. - Don't give into cheating peer pressure. - Report cheating. |

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 student's 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.

- 4 = Exceeds Grade Level
- 3 = Meeting Grade Level
- 2 = Approaching Grade Level
- 1 = Not Meeting Grade Level

Current Student Grades and Parent Portal

Parents and students can access their current grades and assignments through the Parent and Student Portal linked [here](#). The Portal provides parents and students with a view of the teacher gradebook and attendance records. This is a highly useful tool that provides a constant flow of information on a student's progress.

Student Fees, Fines, and Charges

The Denver Public School Board recognizes the need for student fees to fund certain school activities. At Merrill, the student activity fee is \$40. 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.

Unpaid fees can also affect participation in the 8th grade Elitch Garden celebration and the Continuation ceremony.

Athletics and Activities

Middle School Eligibility Policy:

It must be understood by players and their parents that participation in the Nuggets/Avalanche Prep League is **a privilege and not a right**. The principal, the athletic director, teachers and coaches are collaboratively involved in determining which students are eligible to participate in the Nuggets/Avalanche Prep League/games.

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

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. 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 that week's 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) will make the determination of eligibility for the school.

Fall Sports

| Boys | Girls | Coed |
|---------------|------------|---------------|
| Soccer | Volleyball | Cross Country |
| Flag Football | Softball | |

Winter Sports

| Boys | Girls |
|------------|------------|
| Basketball | Basketball |

Spring Sports

| Boys | Girls | Coed |
|----------|--------|-----------------|
| Baseball | Soccer | Floor Hockey |

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. The \$25 athletic fee is due once the student makes the team.

Registration/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. This year we are also proud to be a 1:1 MyTech school in which all students will be issued their very own take-home chromebook. More information about MyTech can be found [here](#). Additionally, we will have a robust set of quarterly after school offerings that range from various staff-led clubs to specific experiences coordinated by community partners.

For the 17-18 school year, Merrill Middle School has a \$20 fee for student activities, a \$20 fee for the MyTech chromebook program, and a \$5 uniform fee for any student enrolled in PE. The activity fee goes towards events like after school socials, positive behavior rewards, student planners, student ID and lanyards, and after school clubs and programs.

For parents who cannot afford to pay all fees at registration, a payment plan may be set up with Ms. Alex in the Main Office.

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:

| | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Rachel Michelson | Psychologist |
| Taha Zaffar | Social Worker |
| Emily Barlow | Guidance Counselor |
| Emily Lupo | Educational Counselor |
| Aimee Leifer | Prevention Specialist |
| Haymond Foreman | Behavioral Student Advisor |
| Vincent Franklin | Dean of Culture |

Merrill also partners with the Mariposa Center and Judi's House to support our students who have experienced loss and/or trauma.

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 school nurse will check the injured student and will determine if first aid can be given (minor injuries) or if the paramedics should be 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.
- A building accident report is completed and filed.

Illness and Accidents

Students who get sick/injured during the school day are required to get a pass from their teacher and check into the clinic with the school nurse. Parents will be contacted by school to determine next steps.

Ambulance Expense

Any expenses incurred by emergency use of an ambulance will have to be covered by the parents or guardians of those students involved.

Dispensing Medications to Students

The 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 on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7:45 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Students must be supervised by a Merrill staff member when accessing the LMC. During lunch time, students may receive a pass to be in the LMC so they may study or read.

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 two (2) 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 items will be put outside the main office. 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 a la 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:

Student ID numbers are used to access computerized student accounts in the school cafeteria. The student ID number can be found on the student school schedule or students can inquire with the Main Office.

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. **An easy way to manage your students lunch account for school lunches can be found at <https://www.myschoolbucks.com>.**

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

Student Deliveries

All student deliveries must be taken to the Main Office. The Office will contact your student to inform them of the delivery. Students will need to pick up items during their lunch break.

Student Messages

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 are not permitted to use cell phones during instructional periods.*****

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 2:30P.M. Messages left after 2:30 pm may not be delivered before the end of the school day.

Thefts: Reporting a Loss or Theft

Lost or stolen items need to be reported to the school resource officer (Mr. Woodard).

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 uniforms, coats, sweaters, etc., with your name.
- Do not share your locker combination unless you are assigned a locker partner

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 have the opportunity to make up lost time with their teachers during lunch or after school. Students must set time with specific teacher(s).

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) 424-0627**

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 (24 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 main 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.

Truancy Policy

A student is truant if absent from class without permission, including any unexcused tardy of more than ten minutes. Truancy is a negative, uncooperative action that is a serious violation of school expectations. A truant student is referred to student services office for determination of the appropriate consequence, which could include lunch detention, after school detention, ISIR, 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

| | | |
|------------------|------------------------|--|
| Tardiness | 1 st Tardy: | Warning and RA dialogue with teacher |
| | 2 nd Tardy: | Call home. Teacher assigned Lunch Detention |
| | 3 rd Tardy: | Call home. Teacher assigned After School Detention |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| *Tardy cycle begins each quarter. | 4 th + Tardy: | IC discipline referral, Parent Conference |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|

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.

Make-up Work After Absences

Excused Absences

Make-up work should be arranged with student’s specific teachers.

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 plan.

Suspension:

Students who miss school due to suspensions are 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.

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 be communicated with the office staff and approved by 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.

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 school administration. After a conference, bus privileges may be revoked for a period of time. 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, including fully charged chromebook.
- 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.

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**
- **After School Detention**
- **Parent Conference and Behavior Contracts**
- **In School Intervention**
- **Out of School Suspension**
- **Referral to MTSS**
- **Referral to PACE (an alternative educational setting)**
- **Referral to Pathway School**

Physical altercations are automatic out of school suspensions and a mandatory Restorative Approach meeting.

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:

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|---|---|
| Disrespect / Defiance / Non-compliance/ Insubordination | Any behavior, activity, or action deliberately undermining any school personnel's authority |
| Fighting / Physical Aggression | 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. |
| Abusive / Inappropriate Language | Any use of words, phrases, language or gestures that are sexual and /or derogatory in nature or inappropriate for the school environment |

| | |
|--|--|
| Harassment / Bullying Inappropriate | Inappropriate comments and or unwanted verbal, physical, or emotional advances |
| Disruption | Any behavior, action, or disturbance that interrupts the teaching or learning process that does not cause physical harm or injury to oneself or others |
| Tardy | 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 |
| Truancy | Truancy: Deliberate failure to attend class; more than 5 min 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 |
| Inappropriate Display of Affection | Any public displays of inappropriate contact |
| Dress Code Violation | Clothing or accessories that are disruptive to the learning process |
| Technology Violation | Technology use that is not in support of education and research a is not consistent with the education objectives of the school |
| Failure to do Assigned Discipline | Failure to do any assigned discipline for any misbehavior |
| Academic Dishonesty | Any deliberate attempt to gain an unfair academic advantage. Includes: Plagiarism, cheating, aiding other students in Academic Dishonesty, falsifying records, forgery |
| Theft | Stealing school or personal property from faculty, school employees, or other students |
| Vandalism / Property Damage | An intentional action that damages school property. Students / guardians will be required to pay for damages |
| Use / Possession of Weapons | 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 |
| Bomb Threat / False Alarm | Bomb Threat: Any communicated threat to bomb any school facility / property. False Alarm: Pulling a fire alarm without legitimate reason |

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|--|--|
| Use / Possession of Drugs/Alcohol / tobacco and / or tobacco paraphernalia | Possession and or use of or being under the influence of illegal drugs; possession of drug paraphernalia |
|--|--|

Confiscated items and those not permitted at school, such as laser pens, spinners, cd players, speakers, iPods, cameras, electronic games, permanent markers and/or any other item that disrupts the learning environment will be given to the Dean of Culture. 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.

- Pajama style pants are not permitted.
- Pants that are torn or ripped are subject to be a dress code violation based upon location of tear/rip.

Other Clothing / Items

- **Hoodies** will not be permitted in the classroom; students shall put them in their lockers.
- 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.
- **Blankets** are not a clothing item and are not permitted in the building.
- Hijabs 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 anyone (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).
- No two or more people may dress alike for the purposes of intimidation.
- No backpacks (including string bags) are allowed in any classrooms during the school day.

The Merrill staff 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

*****A hall pass is required for all students to be out of the classroom*****

Students are expected to anticipate their needs and to plan ahead. In general, hall passes will not be given to 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 given 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. Each classroom will have a laminated pass and students will need this pass in order to leave the classroom. Student will also need to sign out and in upon return to the classroom.

Passes will be written/given at the request of school staff, or if a teacher holds a student after class for a conference.

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. 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 five hours per week--approximately one hour per night. Homework assignments may be accessed via a teacher's webpage--click [here](#) to access a comprehensive list of teacher pages.

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. 8th graders are not to share their lockers/locker combinations with any other student.
 2. 6th and 7th 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.
- 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.

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. **No gum is allowed in school.**

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.
- Cyber bullying and other electronic harassments will not be tolerated and will have severe consequences.

Phone Policy

Students are not allowed to talk or text on their cellular phones during the school day. Students are permitted to use their cell phones during lunch and recess only. If a student needs to contact a parent or a parent needs to contact a student during instructional time, 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.

- Cell phones must remain out of sight during instructional time.
- Staff members may confiscate cell phones if they are seen during instructional time.

Visitor Policy

Security at Merrill Middle School is of utmost importance. We have instituted a visitor policy to assure the safety of all students and staff at Merrill. All visitors must check in and out of the main office.

Student Visitors

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 requires 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.