



MESQUITE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

# **Student Handbook**

## **2011-2012**



# Welcome

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to the new school year! Teachers and other school staff members want this year to be an especially good one for each child. For this to happen, we all have to work together: students, parents, and teachers. This student handbook is designed to help us do this.

The student handbook contains information that both students and parents are likely to need during the school year. **Throughout the handbook you will notice symbols that indicate whether a policy applies only to students at certain campus levels. There is a key at the bottom of each page to explain these symbols. If there is no symbol next to a statement, then it applies to ALL STUDENTS.** We have attempted to make the language as straightforward as possible; however, please be aware that the term “the student’s parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume a school-related responsibility for a student.

The student handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy and the Texas Education Code. Changes in policy that affect student handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through the MISD website ([www.mesquiteisd.org](http://www.mesquiteisd.org)).

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

Two separate documents have been combined in these pages for your convenience. The student handbook details general and academic information. The second book, the Student Code of Conduct, is numbered separately.

The last page of this book is a signature page with a letter from Dr. Linda Henrie, Superintendent of Schools. All students should return this signed form to their schools. Please take the time to look over the information provided. Understanding this information will assist you in the path to success in Mesquite ISD schools.

**If changes in local policy or state law become effective after the printing of this book, they will supersede the information currently printed in this book.** For the most recent version of the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct, please go to [www.mesquiteisd.org](http://www.mesquiteisd.org).

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# General Campus Policies & Procedures

## **Attendance Policy**

Regular school attendance is essential for the student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led activities, to build each day’s learning on that of the previous day, and to grow as an individual.

Absences from class may result in a serious disruption of a student’s mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws, one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit, are of special interest to students and parents.

## **Compulsory Attendance**

The state compulsory attendance law requires that school employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission from any class or from required tutorials will be considered truant and subject to disciplinary action.

Truancy may also result in assessment of penalties by a court of law against both the student and his or her parents. A complaint against the parent may be filed in the appropriate court if the student:

- Is absent from school 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

If a student is absent 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, and those absences are unexcused, the school is required by law to report the absences to the appropriate court.

## **Attendance for Credit**

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit.

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

- All absences will be reviewed with special consideration given for religious holy days,

documented health care appointments for which routine make-up work has been completed, and other special circumstances as defined by the Texas Education Code.

- For a student transferring into the District after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching consensus about a student’s absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that its decision is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student’s parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documentation expressing reasons for the student’s absences.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student, parent, or other representative will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

If credit is lost because of excessive absences, the attendance committee will decide how the student may regain credit. The student or parent may appeal the committee’s decision to the District’s Board of Trustees by filing a written request with the Superintendent within 30 days following the last day of instruction in the semester for which credit was denied.

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

## **Bicycles**

Students who ride bicycles to school will park them in an orderly manner in the racks in a designated area. Other students’ bicycles are not to be ridden with or without the permission of the owner.

## **Cafeteria**

The Mesquite ISD participates in the National Breakfast and School Lunch Program. Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and United States Department of

Agriculture (USDA) guidelines are followed to meet the nutritional needs for all students, with menus planned by a certified dietician. Specific Food and Nutrition information may be obtained by calling (972) 882-5500.

### ***Payment for Meals***

Students are encouraged to purchase meals from the Food and Nutrition Department in advance. The Point of Sale system allows for payments to be made to the student's account weekly, monthly or yearly. Each student is assigned a personal identification number (PIN) at the beginning of the school year. The PIN numbers are not transferable from school to school; however, the money in that account can be transferred to any other campus in the MISD. If parents eat with a student, the parent cannot use the student's account to pay for his or her meal.

Three types of payments are accepted for school meals or a la carte items. Cash or checks are welcome at the school cafeteria. Online payments by credit or debit card are accepted by setting up an account through the Parent Account Management System (PAMS). The online address for information or to make a payment is [www.paypams.com](http://www.paypams.com).

### ***State-Mandated Nutrition Guidelines***

TDA has issued a nutrition policy to be followed by all Texas public schools. The policy places strict limits on any food or drink provided or sold to students, other than through our Food and Nutrition Services. Elementary students may not have access to candy or any other food of minimal nutritional value during the school day. Middle school and high school students also have restrictions during meal periods. The specific policy is available through the school principal or online at [www.agr.state.tx.us](http://www.agr.state.tx.us).

### ***Free and Reduced-Cost Meals***

Applications for free or reduced cost meals are sent home at the beginning of each school year from the student's home campus. Applications must be complete, listing all members of the household and family income. Should the family income status change, assistance may be requested at any time during the school year. Only one application for each household is required. Completed applications should be returned to the campus.

### **Change of Address or Telephone Number**

When the address or telephone number of a student has been changed, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the school administration immediately. Proof of residency at the new address may be required.

### **Cheating/Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty**

Copying another person's work, such as homework, classwork or a test, is a form of cheating. Plagiarism, which is the use of another person's original ideas or writing without giving credit to the true author, will also be considered cheating, and the student will be subject to academic disciplinary action that may include loss of credit for the work in question. Teachers who have reason to believe that a student has engaged in cheating or other academic dishonesty will assess the academic penalty to be imposed. Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary penalties as well, according to the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Check Acceptance Policy**

All personal checks written to the district must include the current address and phone number of the account holder. The account holder's name should also be legible and printed on the check.

In the event that a check written to any Mesquite ISD Campus, club or organization is returned unpaid by the bank, Mesquite ISD or its agent will redeposit the check electronically. In addition, the account holder agrees that Mesquite ISD may electronically collect a return check fee of \$30 plus applicable sales tax. The district may contract with a collection company in an effort to redeem returned checks. The use of a check for payment is the account holder's acknowledgement and acceptance of this policy and its terms.

### **Closed Campus**

Mesquite schools operate on the closed campus concept. Specifically, this means that once the student arrives at school, he/she remains on campus until his/her regular dismissal time. Illnesses or other circumstances, however, may arise which would be considered by the principal or administrative personnel as legitimate reasons to dismiss a student early. In such cases, the student is required to have permission prior to leaving the campus.

## **Conferences with Teachers**

When parents feel it advisable to contact teachers personally, they are encouraged to leave their telephone numbers in the school office in order that the teacher may return the call later. Scheduled conferences are welcome if a telephone conversation does not prove adequate. Parents may also communicate with their child's teacher via e-mail. Parents/guardians are requested to contact the school when failing grades appear on the student's report card.

## **Counseling and Guidance Services**

Counselors are available to counsel with students about career choices, school work, course selection, personal problems and higher education aspirations.

Other guidance services include orientation of students to new situations, information services, and classroom guidance.

Counseling and guidance services are available both to the students and parents. Parents may call for appointments; normally, students may see the counselors by prearranged appointments.

Parents who wish to confer with a counselor about their child should contact the office by phone and arrange a conference. Counselors encourage collaboration between home and school to achieve student success.

## **Dating Violence**

Mesquite ISD developed a policy concerning dating violence. Students and parents may go to the Mesquite ISD website for information. In addition, a resource from the state may be found at <http://governor.state.tx.us/files/women/program.pdf>.

## **Dress Code**

Mesquite ISD's guidelines for student dress are designed to prevent disruption and maintain a business-like learning environment.

Many fashions, fads and trends might be appropriate or accepted for leisure activities; not all of these fashions are appropriate for schools. Mesquite ISD's dress code is designed to be flexible and broad so that it can be adapted to address ever-changing fads and fashions. Interpretation is up to each school principal, and his or her decisions regarding dress and grooming are considered final. Middle school and high school students will be expected to wear standard dress as defined in the Student Code of Conduct.

If parents have questions about whether something is considered appropriate for their children to wear to school, they are encouraged to ask the school principal in advance of allowing the child to wear it.

For more information about the dress code, please refer to the Student Code of Conduct.

## **Enrollment of New Students**

Each child must be enrolled by the child's parent or the child's guardian or other person with legal control of the child under a court order. A school shall record the name, address, and date of birth of the person enrolling a child.

In each public school a student must be identified by the student's legal surname as that name appears:

- (1) on the student's birth certificate or other document suitable as proof of the student's identity; or
- (2) in a court order changing the student's name.

Any student admitted to a Mesquite ISD school must have records such as report card and/or transcript from the previous school attended to verify his/her academic standing. Verification of residency and current immunization records are also required. Every student enrolling in a Mesquite ISD public school for the first time must present documentation of immunizations as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

No later than 30 days after enrolling in school, the parent and school district in which the student was previously enrolled shall furnish records which verify the identity of the student. These records may include the student's birth certificate or a copy of the student's school records from the most recently attended school. (Ed. Code Sec. 25.002) The District forwards a student's records on request to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll without the necessity of the parent's permission.

In order for a person other than a parent, legal guardian or other person having lawful control to enroll a student in MISD, all district administrative guidelines must be adhered to. Falsification of information required by these guidelines is a very serious offense. It is a Class C misdemeanor to use a government record to falsify enrollment information. In addition to the penalty provided by Section 37.10, Penal Code, a person who knowingly falsifies information required for enrollment of a student in a school district is liable to the district if the

student is not eligible for enrollment in the district but is enrolled on the basis of the false information. The person is liable, for the period during which the ineligible student is enrolled, for the greater of:

- (1) the maximum tuition fee the district may charge under Section 25.038; or
- (2) the amount the district has budgeted for each student as maintenance and operating expenses.  
[EDUCATION CODE Sec. 25.001(h)]

Students are expected to attend the school within the attendance zone in which they live.

### **Fund Raising**

There shall be no fund-raising activities except those approved school activities which have been sanctioned by the Superintendent or designee.

### **Health Care Appointments**

A student may be excused for a temporary absence resulting from a visit to health care professionals if that student begins classes or returns to school on the same day of the appointment. A note from the health care professional must be provided to the school office upon return of the student to school. Students whose absences are excused for these reasons may not be penalized for that absence and will be counted as if the student attended school for ADA purposes. The student will be allowed a reasonable time to make up the missed school work.

### **Identification Cards [H]**

For identification, safety and security purposes, student ID cards will be issued to all students for a minimal fee. These cards should be carried on campus at all times and are required for checking out library books and attending some school functions.

### **Instructional Technology**

#### **Web Learning Tools**

Mesquite ISD provides its students with access to computers, network resources, and the Internet for the purpose of enhancing instruction, expanding learning opportunities, and promoting educational excellence. Collaboration, learning, and sharing work using web and network tools are part of the educational experience. These online tools make learning engaging, provide opportunities for feedback from other students and teachers outside of class, and enable students to practice

and refine communication/digital citizenship skills.

Throughout the school year, students and teachers will use a variety of learning tools on the Internet for the purpose of sharing in collaboration on many projects including writing, artwork, voice and video recordings, and photos.

Students may create and publish wikis, blogs, respond to discussion forums, and Learning Management Systems (LMS: i.e., eLearn.mesquiteisd.org) pages on the MISD website as part of a class or school sponsored activity.

### **Student E-mail**

Mesquite ISD provides a student e-mail account to students in grades 3 through 12 using Gagggle. Gagggle Student E-mail is a safe, filtered, and monitored e-mail system designed specifically for use with students. Gagggle allows schools to provide e-mail accounts for students while supporting the Childrens Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and the Childrens Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Gagggle e-mail accounts may be accessed by students from any computer with an Internet connection—from home, school, or elsewhere.

For more information about student e-mail, including login information, visit [www.mesquiteisd.org](http://www.mesquiteisd.org), click on the “Student” tab, then click on “Student E-mail.”

### **Leaving Campus During the School Day [H]**

A written or telephoned request from a parent or guardian is required for a student to be released early from school. At the time to be excused, students must sign out in the office before leaving the building. Students must also sign in at the office if they are arriving after the start of the school day or returning after an early dismissal. Only authorized persons may pick up the student.

### **Library Services and Procedures**

MISD school libraries offer a variety of resources and services to students. The Library Services website offers students access to the library online catalog, online databases and encyclopedias, internet searching tools, and other online reference materials at [www.mesquiteisd.org/library](http://www.mesquiteisd.org/library). Choose the name of your school for the online materials, policies and procedures that are specific to your campus.

### **Home Access to Online Resources**

All online databases and encyclopedias are available to students from any computer that is connected to the

Internet, either at home or elsewhere. The campus librarian will provide students with password information and instructions for accessing online information from outside the district.

### ***Policies for Borrowing Materials***

1. Any person registered in a local school may borrow a book from any MISD school library.
2. Books may be kept for two weeks and renewed for an unlimited number of times unless another student needs them.
3. Students may renew library materials themselves via the Webcat online catalog one time only. If an item needs to be renewed again, it must be brought back to the library for renewal.
4. Reference books and AV items may be borrowed overnight only. Overnight items are checked out after 3 p.m. each day and returned by 8:30 a.m. the following day.
5. There is no daily fee charged for books and other items kept past their due date; however, items that are kept more than one month past their due date will be assumed lost and the total cost of the item will be billed to the student.
6. All lost or damaged books should be paid for within the current school year.
7. An item which has been lost and paid for, but which is subsequently found, may be returned, and the cost of the item will be refunded if the item is returned within the current school year.
8. Libraries will be open at least 15 minutes before and after school.
9. All students may use the Mesquite Public Libraries.

### **Lockers [M] [H]**

Lockers remain under the jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student. The school reserves the right to inspect all lockers. A student has full responsibility for the security of the locker and is responsible for making certain that it is locked and that the combination is not available to others. Searches of lockers may be conducted at any time, whether or not the student is present. The decision to assign lockers rests with the principal.

### **Lost and Stolen Items**

All articles, including books, found on the school grounds or in the halls of the school building should be

taken to the office. All articles not claimed at the end of the school year will be disposed of through proper channels. Students should not bring electronic entertainment devices and other personal items to school. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

### **Messages for Students**

Enrollments are too large for the school office to receive and deliver telephone messages or supplies to individual students. In case of emergency, the school office should be contacted for assistance.

### **Parent Teacher Association (PTA)**

Since the Mesquite Independent School District believes strongly in the objectives of PTA, teachers, parents and students are urged to join and support their respective school's organization.

### **Parking Regulations [M] [H]**

Middle school students do not have the privilege of driving and parking on campus.

Students who drive vehicles to school are required to park in the designated student parking areas. The district is not responsible for damage to a vehicle that occurs while it is on school property. Permission is required for any student who finds it necessary to go to his/her vehicle during the school day. Students are required to purchase a parking sticker from the office each year, and failure to do so will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. The school reserves the right to search any vehicle if reasonable cause exists to do so. Students are responsible for the contents of the vehicle they drive to school.

### **Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence**

In the summer of 2003, the 78th Legislature mandated that each school district shall require students during each school day at each school in the district to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas state flag. In addition, each school is required to provide for the observance of one minute of silence following the recitation of the pledges of allegiance. During the one-minute period, each student, may, as the student chooses, meditate or engage in any other silent activity that is not likely to interfere with or distract another student. All

Mesquite ISD schools will observe this mandate. All students are required to be respectful during the pledges and moment of silence.

### **Prayer/Religion**

The Mesquite Independent School District maintains a policy of neutrality concerning religion. Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instruction or other activities of the school. The school will not require, encourage or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

### **Respect for All**

Mesquite ISD has a very diverse student population and strives to maintain an environment of respect and acceptance in its schools. Students must not engage in harassing behaviors motivated by ethnicity, gender, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability directed toward another student.

Students are expected to treat other students and adults with courtesy and respect, to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive, and to stop these behaviors when asked or told to stop.

The District encourages parental and student support in its efforts to address and prevent harassment and/or bullying in any form in the public schools.

### **Schedule Changes**

Once a student has registered, no schedule changes are to be made except in the case where an error has been made in scheduling or to equalize the teacher's load. No student is to leave class to change his/her schedule unless called by the office.

Requests to change teachers are not granted except when deemed necessary by the Principal.

### **School Calendar**

The school operates according to the Board-adopted school calendar. In the event of bad weather, tune to radio station KEOM 88.5 FM for announcements related to school closings. Holidays may be used as make-up days for school days lost due to bad weather. The latest changes to the calendar will be available on the MISD website ([www.mesquiteisd.org](http://www.mesquiteisd.org)).

### **School Day Schedule**

The instructional day for **elementary students** begins at 7:55 a.m. and ends at 2:55 p.m.

The instructional day for **middle school students** begins at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 3:25 p.m.

The instructional day for **high school students** is from 8:35 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

After dismissal of school in the afternoon, students are to leave campus immediately unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher. Supervision of students before or after school is not available.

### **School Functions**

Students are held responsible for their conduct while in attendance at any school function. A student who is on the school grounds or in attendance at any school function at any place, night, or day, is subject to all regulations of the school and will be governed accordingly. Student identification cards may be required to attend some school functions.

### **School Publications**

All school-sponsored publications such as newspaper, yearbooks, etc. are under the supervision of the teacher sponsor and are to be approved by the Principal. Publications not sponsored by the school shall be submitted to the Principal for review and approval.

### **School-Sponsored Trips**

Many school-sponsored trips are made each year for the various activities in which students participate. The following regulations govern trips sponsored by the school.

1. Students missing school when on a school-sponsored trip are not counted absent, but are required to make up the work missed. Arrangements should be made with each teacher for make-up work before the trip is made.
2. Students must take the responsibility of observing all safety rules.
3. Students making a school-sponsored trip are under the supervision of a sponsor and are expected to follow the MISD Student Code of Conduct and dress code.
4. Students may not miss any class more than ten (10) times within the school year, unless they are participating in competition beyond the district level.

## **Tardiness**

The student is tardy when not in his/her assigned room when the tardy bell rings. Nearly all tardiness is avoidable and is excusable only in cases of illness or emergency. To get an excused tardy slip, the student's parent must report to the school the emergency which caused the delay.

Should a student be detained by a teacher, he/she should secure a note from that teacher and present it to the teacher in charge of the class he/she is entering. For such an occurrence, the student is not to be charged with tardiness.

## **Telephone**

Because of the tremendous amount of essential business that must be transacted over the office telephones, students are requested not to ask for use of the telephone except in extreme emergencies.

Office personnel will deliver messages in cases of emergency. No toll calls from office telephones are to be made by students.

## **Textbooks**

School books and other instructional materials used in the classroom are provided by the State. When a student is issued a textbook, his/her name must be written in the book in ink. Books should be properly covered at all times. Each student is responsible for the books issued to him/her. A lost or stolen book must be paid for prior to the student receiving a new one. If a book should be found after it has been paid for, the student may be refunded the money upon presentation of the receipt issued at the time of payment. All records of book numbers will be maintained by the subject teachers. Students will be expected to pay for lost or severely damaged textbooks. A student whose textbook record is not clear will not be issued any school textbooks until the records are cleared. Release of student records, including official transcripts, will be delayed pending payment for lost textbooks/library books.

## **Use of a Student's Image/Information**

Photographs of students (including video images) along with student names, activities, honors and achievements will be allowed for use in official Mesquite ISD projects and events unless a parent specifically requests that such usage be denied. For more information, please refer to the district's [Student Directory Information](#) (located in the Student Code of Conduct).

## **Visitors**

Parents and other visitors are welcome to visit schools. All visitors must first report to the office and will be required to furnish a picture ID. Visitor badges will be issued for anyone going into any part of the building. No visitors will be allowed in any part of the building without approval from the office.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher, and such visits are not permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment.

The Mesquite ISD works in partnership with various non-profit organizations to bring group guidance services to students at many campuses, with parental permission. Non-profit organizations are chosen to partner with the Mesquite ISD based on curriculum relevancy and alignment, training level and certification of employees, and applicability and sources of organizational funding. However, individual therapy or counseling with students by outside agencies during the school day is not permitted on any campus.

Trespassing on school premises is strictly prohibited in accordance with Section 37.107 of the Texas Education Code.

## **Withdrawals**

A student withdrawing from school is required to furnish verification by a parent that he or she is to be withdrawn. The student should report to the registrar's office at the beginning of the last full day he/she is in school.

Any student who discontinues school without formally withdrawing will have his/her record charged with the price of all textbooks, any library books and any other fees owed. Graduating seniors will not be able to get an official copy of his/her record until all records are clear. School records will not be cleared until all obligations are met. A parent may request and receive an unofficial copy of the student's records for delivery to another district.

# Health & Safety Information

## **Bacterial Meningitis**

### ***What is meningitis?***

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

### ***What are the symptoms?***

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

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

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

### ***How serious is bacterial meningitis?***

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

### ***How is bacterial meningitis spread?***

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

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

### ***How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?***

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes or cigarettes.

There are vaccines for some strains of bacterial meningitis. The Texas Department of State Health Services issued new vaccine requirements beginning in August 2009 that require 7th grade students to be immunized with meningococcal vaccine (MCV4). Older students may also benefit from vaccination, especially those living in resident halls or dorm settings and those entering the military.

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

Seek prompt medical attention.

### ***For more information***

The school nurse, your family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Texas Department of State Health Services office to ask about meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), and the Texas Department of State Health Services, [www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us).

## **Clinic Procedures**

A student who becomes ill during school hours is to report to the teacher who will send the student to the clinic. No student is allowed to go home without the parent being notified. Students are not to call parents from cell phones asking to go home; such calls are to be made from the clinic by the nurse or other school personnel. A nurse is on duty or on call at all times for emergencies.

## **Communicable Diseases**

Certain communicable diseases are monitored closely by public health authorities and require exclusion from school and school related activities. The period of time involved in exclusion varies according to the specific disease. Upon recovery from this type of disease, students may return to school as directed in writing by a physician and must provide the school with the original written

statement indicating the student may return to class. A school representative will copy the statement for health and attendance records and return the original to the person delivering the statement.

### **Fire and Disaster Drills**

Fire drills are conducted for two purposes: (1) to train students to leave the building orderly and quickly in case of an emergency alarm, and (2) to teach self control in times of emergency.

When the fire alarm is sounded, all students should immediately follow the teacher's directions and proceed to the designated exit. There should be no talking or pushing. When the students reach the safety zone designated by the teacher, they should face the building but remain in line.

In addition to fire drills, disaster drills may also be conducted. Teachers and staff at each campus will explain the signals and procedures for fire and disaster drills to students.

### **Immunizations**

The State of Texas requires that every child in the state shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with an established immunization schedule.

A 30-day provisional enrollment may be available to students new to Mesquite ISD as provided by the State of Texas. Students transferring between campuses in Mesquite ISD may not qualify for provisional enrollment.

Medical exemptions from immunizations are recognized by Mesquite ISD. This type of exemption must be obtained from the students' physician in writing and state that the required immunization poses a significant risk to the health and well being of the child or any member of the child's household. Unless indicated as a lifelong condition, the statement is valid for only one year.

Exclusion from immunization requirements for religious reasons or reasons of conscience is available to residents of the State of Texas. Information for obtaining an affidavit for exclusion from immunization requirements is available through the Texas Department of State Health Services website at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm#exclusions>. Families interested in this option should be aware that their children will be susceptible to vaccine preventable diseases and in case of emergency or epidemic may be excluded from attending school.

### **Injuries/Accident Insurance**

The District is not responsible for medical costs associated with a student's injury. At the beginning of each school year, the District does make available, however, an optional, low-cost student accident insurance program to assist parents in meeting medical expenses. A parent who desires coverage for his or her child will be responsible for paying insurance premiums and submitting claims.

### **Medication Policies**

Medication should be administered at home whenever possible. Medication administered during school hours must be prescribed by a physician or advanced nurse practitioner (ANP) and filled by a pharmacist licensed in the State of Texas.

Written instructions from a physician or ANP are required for administration of over-the-counter or sample medications during school hours. Prescription medication labels must include the student's name and instructions, and be clearly legible. Instructions for medication administration must include the following information: name of the student, name of the medication, reason the medication is being given, specific amount to be given, time the medication is to be given, and the method used to administer the medication.

Parents or guardians may provide no more than a two (2) weeks supply of medication at a time, excluding inhalers. Please note that most pharmacies will provide families with an extra empty, but labeled, container for use at school.

Written permission to administer medication must be submitted annually and is active only for the current school year. Changes to daily medications require written instruction from the physician or APN and written permission from the parent. Parents or guardians are responsible for advising the school nurse that a medication has been discontinued.

All medications must be presented in an original container and must be checked into the office or clinic upon arrival on campus. Failure to comply with the medication policy will result in a Code of Conduct violation.

### **Asthma and Anaphylaxis Medication**

Asthma and anaphylaxis are life threatening conditions, and students with those conditions may be allowed to possess and self administer prescription

medications for those conditions during the school day or at school-related events. Student possession and self administration of asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school require the student demonstrate his or her ability to self administer the medication for the physician or licensed health care provider and the school nurse, if available. Requirements also include written authorization from the student's parent or guardian and physician or other licensed health care provider on file in the school clinic indicating the student is capable of independently administering his or her own asthma or emergency anaphylaxis medication. With these safeguards in place, the student may possess and self administer his or her prescribed medication at their discretion during school hours or at school related events.

Written authorizations to self administer asthma or anaphylaxis medication should be updated annually unless otherwise indicated by the physician.

Medication in a student's possession must be in an original container with a prescription label. Please note that most pharmacies will place a label on the inhaler device upon request.

### ***Diabetes Management***

Students with diabetes may possess equipment and medication used in the treatment of diabetes during the school day and at school-related events given certain conditions. According to Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 168, a diabetes management and treatment plan must be developed and implemented by the student's parent or guardian and the physician responsible for the student's diabetes treatment. This plan must evaluate the student's ability to manage diabetes and his or her level of understanding of diabetes and must be signed by the parent or guardian and physician responsible for the student's diabetes treatment. An individual health plan must be implemented by the school nurse and must incorporate components of the student's diabetes management and treatment plan. In accordance with the student's individualized health plan which incorporates the diabetes management and treatment plan signed by the parent or guardian and physician that indicates the student's ability to manage diabetes and his or her level of understanding of diabetes, a school shall permit a student to attend to the management and care of his or her diabetes which may include: performing blood glucose level checks; administering insulin; treating hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia; possessing necessary monitoring and

treatment equipment designed for diabetes care; and, attending to the management of his or her diabetes in the classroom, in any area of the school grounds, or at any school-related activity.

### **Rumor Control and Information Hotline (972) 882-KIDS**

If a crisis occurs, it can be difficult for parents to get accurate information about the situation or to reach a particular campus by phone. In the event of a campus emergency or rumor or violence, patrons may call the Rumor Control & Information Hotline at (972) 882-KIDS to get immediate and accurate information about the situation or to express concerns to district staff. After hours or during peak calling times, callers may leave a voice mail message; the call will be returned as soon as possible. For updates during an emergency, tune to KEOM 88.5 FM.

### **School Health Advisory Council**

The MISD School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) meets at least four times each year and makes recommendations on student health curriculum and instruction. Information about the SHAC is on the MISD website: [www.mesquiteisd.org](http://www.mesquiteisd.org).

### **School Resource Officer [M] [H]**

All secondary schools have a certified law enforcement officer on campus in a cooperative effort between the City of Mesquite or City of Balch Springs and the Mesquite Independent School District. The primary duties of the School Resource Officer, or SRO, are to provide assistance for students, serve as a guest lecturer on a variety of topics, be a spokesperson for the police department and provide security at certain school-sponsored events. School Resource Officers often talk with students without an administrator or parent present during the normal course of their duties. Other actions that may be taken by the SRO may be the issuance of citations for fighting, possession of tobacco products, abusive language, etc.

### **Students Needing Assistance**

All schools have a certified school counselor available to help students in need. A student who has been a victim of physical or sexual abuse can obtain assistance and intervention from the school counselor. Counselors are aware of resources available to assist students needing

support. Students who feel like they are a victim or witness of a bullying/harassment/hazing/intimidation incident should tell a trusted adult at school or home.

### **Surveillance Cameras/Video Recordings**

Surveillance cameras are in use in most schools and on most school buses. Video recordings can be used by school personnel when investigating an incident. Tapes and other video recordings will not be available for parent viewing due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

# Academics & Grading

## **Academic Honors [H]**

Honor graduates are determined on a total grade point basis at the completion of the fifth six weeks of their senior year. Two groups of honor students are chosen each year out of the graduating classes.

- The upper five percent of the graduating class will be designated as graduating with “Highest Honors.”
- The next highest five percent will be designated as graduating with “Honors.”
- The Valedictorian and Salutatorian in Mesquite high schools are also determined on a total grade point basis following the end of the fifth six weeks of their senior year.
- To be eligible for Valedictory or Salutatory honors, the student must complete grades 11 and 12 in the Mesquite schools. This work must be completed within the normal four-year period.
- The highest ranking student will be designated as Valedictorian, and the second highest will be designated as Salutatorian.

## **Class Rank [H]**

A student’s class rank is based on total grade points earned from the beginning of his/her freshman year through the completion of the fifth six weeks of his/her senior year. Students who have already met graduation requirements and voluntarily choose to attend high school a fifth year will receive no grade points for courses taken the fifth year. Class rank for these students will be determined by grade points earned in the first four years of high school.

Students will receive grade points only for courses scheduled during the regular school day and during the regular school year as defined by the official school calendar. Courses taken during summer school will not earn grade points.

For more information about the impact of a particular course on class rank or the grade point system, refer to the Course Description Guide or speak with a school counselor.

## **Classification of Students [H]**

The classification of a student depends upon the number of units earned and not upon the number of years spent in high school. To receive credit for a course, students must maintain an average of 70 or above.

Changes in classification are made at the beginning of the academic year. Generally, no changes are made at the end of the first semester. Student classification is based on these units of credit:

Sophomore :	6 units of credit
Junior:	12 units of credit
Senior:	18 units of credit

To be classified as a senior, students must be scheduled to graduate at the end of the spring semester of the current school year.

## **College Courses [H]**

The Mesquite Independent School District recognizes students with the desire to continue their education beyond high school. Enrollment in a recognized institution of higher education accredited by a regional accrediting association as an extension of the school day or school year may be pursued by those students having satisfactory school attendance and grades, written parental/guardian permission and approval from their principal. Grade points are not awarded for these college courses.

## **Concurrent Enrollment**

Concurrent enrollment provides the opportunity for high school seniors to remain in high school and take courses for college credit at the same time.

These courses do not count for high school credit unless special circumstances exist and dual credit has been approved in advance by the Administrative Officer of Curriculum.

## **Dual Credit**

High school credit may be earned for college courses specified in the MISD/Dallas County Community College District Agreement. These DCCCD courses may change from year to year dependent upon the written agreement. Eligible juniors and seniors may register for the courses on their high school campuses or at certain DCCCD campuses. The designated dual credit courses are tuition free, but students are responsible for any books or cost of materials unless the course is taken on the high school campus during the school day. For registration forms and more detailed information, contact the career and technical counselor at each high school.

## **College Days [H]**

Junior and senior students are allowed to have two college days each year. These days are to be used to visit an institution of higher education accredited by a generally recognized accrediting organization for the purpose of determining the student's interest in attending the college or university. The student will be required to make up any work missed but will not be charged with an absence if official documentation of the visit is received by the high school within one week. Official documentation will be:

- A letter on the college/university official letterhead giving the student's name, date, and reason for visit
- An official visitation form from the college/university dated with student name and signed by a college/university official

## **College GPA [H]**

A specific grade point average (GPA) for colleges and universities based on the four-point system will be calculated. A preliminary GPA will be calculated at the end of the fifth six weeks of the senior year. A final GPA based upon all grades recorded on the academic achievement record (transcript) will be calculated after graduation.

## **Correspondence Courses [H]**

Correspondence courses may be accepted as a part of high school graduation requirements for accredited schools in Texas provided the courses are taken from one of two centers that offer secondary level correspondence courses that have been approved by the Texas Education Agency. The two sources of acceptable correspondence courses are (a) the Extension Division of the University of Texas, (b) the Extension Division of Texas Tech University.

The student must have the Principal's prior approval before enrolling in a correspondence course. Grade points are not awarded for correspondence course work.

Grades from correspondence courses must be on file in the high school Registrar's Office at least two weeks prior to graduation for the student to be eligible to participate in the graduation ceremony.

## **Course Load [H]**

All students enrolled in Mesquite ISD high schools are expected to enroll in courses sufficient to earn a minimum of 3 units of graduation credit per semester. Normally this is at least six courses per semester.

## **Credit by Examination**

Students may apply to take an examination for acceleration to gain credit for courses in which they have had no prior formal instruction. A minimum score of 90% on the exam is required to earn credit. Students must be strong academically to pass a test of the essential knowledge and skills (TEKS). The exams are offered at designated times throughout the year through an application process. Students may take an acceleration exam for a specific course one time only. If credit is earned, the student's transcript reflects the grade earned in the course exam. No grade points are awarded for these courses. Testing dates, formal applications and more detailed information is available in the counselor's office at each high school.

## **Dropping Courses and Entering Late [H]**

Students should be careful when considering dropping classes. Grades reflected on report cards/transcripts, grade point average and eligibility for extracurricular activities should be considered. Students who drop a course while failing may become ineligible under Texas Education Agency guidelines. Students who drop a course after the fourth week of school will receive a WD (withdrew from course) for the semester and final grade. The WD will be used in calculating a student's grade point average. Courses will not be dropped after the fourth week of any grading period. At that point, students must complete the six weeks and receive a grade.

Students must enroll in school before the end of the first three weeks in order to carry a full credit load for the semester. Students entering more than three weeks late will not be permitted to take a subject for credit without permission from the Principal.

## **Early Graduation [H]**

Students who choose to graduate from high school in less than four years may be eligible for a scholarship that can be applied to tuition and fees at a Texas university or college. Specific information about eligibility, availability, and the scholarship amounts is available from the school counselor.

## **Early Release [H]**

Early release is available only for junior and senior students who are on track to graduate. This includes passing all parts of state assessments each year. Juniors who have passed all parts of the state assessments as sophomores may be released early on A or B day; seniors

on track for graduation may have early release both A and B day. Early release for students in school work programs will be approved by the principal or designee. One early release period is required for students in a career and technical practicum class unless the student:

- (a) is enrolled in a repeat core course to earn required credit or
- (b) is enrolled in a remediation class (such as state assessment prep)

## **Grading System**

### **Elementary School Grades [E]**

In order to arrive at the value of a student's progress during a semester, the semester is divided into three grading periods of six weeks each. The semester grade is determined by averaging the three six-weeks periods. The final grade for the year is determined by averaging the two semester grades.

Kindergarten students receive a progress report that indicates whether the student is "progressing consistently," is "progressing," or "needs to develop" in curricular areas.

For grades one through six, numerical grades are given for reading, English, spelling, mathematics, science/health, and social studies. Letter grades are given in other subjects and citizenship.

### **Middle School Grades [M]**

In order to arrive at the value of a student's progress during a semester, the semester is divided into three grading periods of six weeks each. A formal examination is given at the end of the six weeks period to be averaged with other work for that six weeks. In computing the six-weeks grade for seventh and eighth graders, the examination is counted as 1/5 of the six-weeks grade.

The semester grade is determined by averaging the three six-weeks periods. Final course grades are determined by averaging the two semester grades.

All grades on report cards are numerical, from 0-100. A grade of 70 is the minimum passing grade. To receive credit for a course, a student must achieve a minimum grade of 70 for the final grade.

Citizenship grades on report cards will be A, B, C, D, or F.

The elementary school grading system will apply to sixth grade students on a middle school campus.

### **High School Grades [H]**

In order to arrive at the value of a student's progress

during a semester, the semester is divided into three grading periods of six weeks each. A formal examination is given at the end of the six weeks period to be averaged with other work for that six weeks. In computing the six-weeks grade, the examination is counted as 1/5 of the entire grade. Final examinations are given the last week of each semester. These exams are over all the material covered the preceding three six-weeks and count 1/5 of the final semester grade.

Courses are either a one-semester or a two-semester course. To receive credit for a course, students must pass with an average of 70 or more on a numerical scale of 100. All grades on report cards and academic achievement records (transcripts) are numerical. One half-credit (0.5) must be earned each semester in a two-semester course to obtain one complete credit for the course. A student who successfully completes one semester with a semester grade of 70 or higher will receive a one-half credit (0.5).

- If only one semester grade in a two-semester course is a passing grade of 70 or higher, both semester grades will be averaged. If this average equals a grade of 70 or higher, credit can be given for both semesters.
- Averaging both semester grades of a two-semester course is only permissible for students enrolled in the two-semester course during the same school year, consecutive fall and spring semesters only. Summer school grades, correspondence course grades or next year grades will not be re-averaged with prior year grades.
- If the average of both semesters in a two-semester course does not equal 70 or higher, the student must re-take and pass the failed semester course.

A student who is not in attendance for at least 90% of the days the class is offered will not be given credit for the class unless he/she is excused due to extenuating circumstances as determined by the campus attendance committee. **Credit will be denied by semester in a two-semester course.**

### **Grade Points [H]**

The following table indicates grades and their corresponding grade point values awarded upon the successful completion of a course. Courses with honors grade points transferred from other districts will be evaluated on a course-by-course basis.

Each semester grade—not the average in a two-

semester course—will be used to calculate grade points.

Grade	Semester Grade		
	Regular	Honors, Pre-AP, GT	AP
95-100	3	6	7
90-94	2.5	5	6
85-89	2	4	5
80-84	1.5	3	4
75-79	1	2	3
70-74	0.5	1	2
Below 70	0	0	0

Some courses do not receive grade points. If in doubt, see the Course Description Guide.

### **Graduation Programs [H]**

Please see the Course Description Guide which is printed each year. This guide contains course requirements for the various high school graduation programs.

### **Graduation Requirements [H]**

A student must earn the required number of credits to graduate from Mesquite ISD high schools. Students must pass all parts of the applicable exit-level assessments by the end of their 12th-grade year to participate in baccalaureate and/or graduation. All graduation requirements for seniors must be completed by the last school day before graduation ceremonies in order to participate in the graduation ceremony. Seniors not completing all requirements by this date would be eligible to participate in the summer graduation ceremony, provided that all graduation requirements have been met.

### **Health Instruction Exemption**

Parents who for religious reasons do not want their children to participate in the classroom discussion of the types, causes, symptoms and cures of diseases in science or health courses may have their children exempt from these portions of the course. However, exempt students are still expected to learn the material and will be given alternative written assignments.

### **Homework**

Homework has a definite place in the learning process. Skill mastery in the basic and fundamental subjects is essential to the student.

As the student progresses into the higher grades, the need increases for extended study to attain competency as

well as breadth and depth of knowledge. In the natural development of a student's activities, the time necessary to complete homework becomes greater as the pupil moves into areas of higher learning.

### **Honor Roll**

#### **Elementary School [E]**

At the elementary level, honor roll criteria are set by the principal and faculty. Elementary criteria may include both academic and citizenship grades.

#### **Middle School/High School [M] [H]**

For a student's name to appear on the honor roll, he/she must attain an overall grade average of 90 in all courses and have no failing grades for the six-weeks grading period. For honor roll purposes only, passing grades in honors or gifted/talented courses will be increased by five points before determining the average.

### **Make-Up Work**

A student is allowed to make-up work when he/she has an excused absence. Immediately upon return to school, the student should ask teachers for detailed assignments covering the work missed and arrange to complete such make-up work promptly.

Make-up work should be completed within the period of time equal to the number of days missed after the student returns to school. Responsibility for completing make-up work, of course, rests entirely upon the student rather than the teacher. Students absent three or more days should contact the school office for aid in getting their assignments.

Students missing school when on a school-sponsored trip are not counted absent, but are required to make up the work missed. Arrangements should be made with each teacher for make-up work before the trip is made.

### **Physical Education Exemption**

Short-term exemption from physical education is possible for students who have physical handicaps, illnesses or other incapacities that a physician deems severe enough to warrant exemption or severe enough to warrant modified activity in such classes. Each case is handled on an individual basis as follows:

1. Each request for exemption or for modified activity must be accompanied by a physician's certificate.

Such certificates are honored but must be renewed each year.

2. When the certificate will allow modified activities in class, the pupil should remain in physical education class. The P.E. teachers adjust the activities of the pupil to the disability.
3. An exempted student may be admitted to regular physical education activities only upon presentation of a written statement from the same physician who signed the original exemption.
4. Students who have religious convictions concerning dress and/or rhythms should not be exempt from P.E. activities; however, alternate activities or dress may be assigned.

### **Physical Education Requirements K-8 [E] [M]**

All students in grades K-5 must engage in at least 135 minutes of physical activity each week as part of the physical education curriculum. Students in grades 6-8 must engage in at least 135 minutes of physical activity each week for at least four semesters during those grade levels as part of the district's physical education curriculum.

### **Physical Education Substitutions [M] [H]**

Beginning with entering ninth-graders in fall 2010, students who receive prior district approval can earn a maximum of four state credits for physical education through substitution of appropriate private or commercially-sponsored physical activity provided that the program meets district criteria. Questions regarding the process of yearly approval should be addressed to the Coordinator - Health and Physical Education.

### **Physical Education Uniforms [M] [H]**

Physical education uniforms must meet specifications as stated in individual campus policies. These uniforms should be purchased at parent expense. (TEC 11.158)

### **Physical Fitness Assessment (FITNESS GRAM) [E] [M] [H]**

The FITNESS GRAM physical fitness assessment will be administered to all students in grades 3-12 each year. Parents may obtain a copy of their child's physical fitness assessment by submitting a letter to their principal at the end of the school year.

### **Progress Reports**

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, teachers shall prepare a progress report for students whose grade average is lower than 70. The progress report will be mailed to the parent/guardian of the student during the fourth week of each six weeks to make them aware of failing grades.

The notice will stipulate that the student will have the remaining three weeks of the six-week grading period to bring the grade up to 70 or above. Students who receive a grade below 70 in regular courses at the end of the six-weeks grading period will be suspended from extracurricular activities for the following three-week period.

### **Promotion Requirements**

#### **Elementary School [E]**

Elementary students must attain an average of seventy (70) or above in both mathematics and language arts (including English, reading and spelling) and must also attain an overall average for the year of seventy (70) in mathematics, English, reading, spelling, social studies, and science/health to be promoted from one grade level to the next.

Students who enter during the school year shall be assigned to the appropriate grade level as soon after enrollment as possible. Decisions for grade placement are based on teacher observations, findings of the testing program administered by the District, and records and recommendations of any sending school.

#### **Middle School [M]**

To be promoted from one grade to the next, seventh and eighth grade students must attain a 70 average in each of the following classes: English, reading, mathematics, science and social studies. In addition, students must attain an overall average of 70 on all courses taken for the year.

Students failing to meet these requirements will be required to attend and satisfactorily complete an extended year program. Students may replace a failing grade with a passing grade for a maximum of two courses. However, the principal has discretion on placement decisions when extenuating circumstances exist.

No special or formal exercises will mark the promotion from middle school to high school.

Sixth graders on a middle school campus must meet elementary school promotion requirements.

## **Registration Procedure [M] [H]**

Spring registration for the following academic year begins as soon as is practical. Each student, with the aid of parents and school personnel, will select the subjects desired for the following year. Certain subjects are required.

## **Report Cards**

Report cards are distributed at the end of each six-week period. The report card is to be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the school. Parents/guardians are requested to contact the school to schedule a conference with the teacher of the course in which the student does not receive a passing grade. Duplicate copies of the report card may be obtained for a small fee. The official record of each student's grades is kept in the school office. In case of discrepancy, the school record is considered to be correct.

## **SAT/ACT Preparation [M] [H]**

Students have access to SAT/ACT preparation programs throughout their secondary school career. Information for these programs can be found in the counseling center.

## **Section 504 Child Find Notice**

Pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the district has a duty to identify, refer, evaluate, and if eligible, provide a free, appropriate public education to disabled students. For additional information about the rights of parents of eligible children, or for answers to any questions you might have about identification, evaluation, and placement into Section 504 programs, please contact the district's Section 504 Coordinator, Debbie Shewmake at 972-288-6411 or by mail at 405 East Davis Street, Mesquite, Texas 75149.

## **Semester Exam Exemptions [H]**

The following requirements must be met in order for a student in grades 9-12 to be exempted from the semester exam.

1. Student must have a semester passing average in class.
2. Student cannot have been assigned to an alternative program or been suspended (including ISS assignments) during the current semester.
3. Student must have perfect attendance. No absences (regardless of reason) are allowed with the following

exception: junior and senior students will be allowed two college visitation days each year without penalty; however, he/she must provide documentation to verify attendance. This is the only absence of any kind allowed for exemptions.

4. Excessive tardies may also affect exemption status.

If a campus chooses to pilot an alternate exemption program for the second semester, the approved requirements will be communicated to students and published on the website before the second semester begins.

During the first semester, exempted students will be required to attend class during the examination days but will have the option of taking the test.

During the second semester, exempted students will not be required to attend class during the examination days.

## **Special Needs Students**

The school district provides services additional and supplemental to, or different from those provided in the regular school program for students with special needs. Instructional arrangements offered may be regular class with modifications, content mastery, resource, self-contained, homebound and/or community-based vocational instruction. Instructional arrangements other than CMC do not receive grade points.

Services provided by these programs are determined by each local campus Admission-Review-Dismissal Committee in accordance with local and state guidelines. When parent permission and all approved data have been secured by the ARD committee, services are recommended which best meet the student's individual needs.

Specific areas of instruction are offered to meet the needs of students with the following disabilities: visual, auditorial, physical, mental, emotional, learning, speech, health impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury and students with multiple disabilities. At the high school level, students may continue their programs of instruction in content mastery, resource, self-contained classes, community-based instruction, vocational adjustment classes and on-the-job training. These programs are designed to permit each student with special needs to progress at his/her own pace. Students develop physical, emotional and vocational skills which help them become successful employees and citizens.

Vocational academic classes carry local credit toward graduation. Students who are enrolled in part-time OJT may earn two credits per year. Students enrolled in full-time OJT may earn six credits per year. VAC students employed full time during the summer months may earn two credits.

Attendance in VAC class must be at least two hours daily by students who are 16 years of age and in part-time employment. Full-time employment is based upon successful part-time employment, student's age and ARD decision. Credits earned in the vocational-academic class and VAC program apply as elective credits if the student returns to regular classes. Such a student could also qualify for content mastery and/or resource.

### ***Providing Assistant to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Need Special Education Services***

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

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

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with prior written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parents of their rights, if they disagree with the district. The district is required to give parents the Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities. Additional information regarding the IDEA is available from the school district

in a companion document [A Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process](#). The following websites provide information to those who are seeking information and resources specific to students with disabilities in their families:

- Texas Project First ([www.texasprojectfirst.org](http://www.texasprojectfirst.org))
- Partners Resource Network ([www.partnerstx.org/howPRNhelps.html](http://www.partnerstx.org/howPRNhelps.html))

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education services is Rosa Minx at (972) 882-7700.

### **State Assessments**

The Texas Education Agency requires state assessments to be administered to all eligible students. These tests are designed to assess mastery of the state curriculum. Mesquite ISD considers competency in the areas tested by state assessments to be necessary to function in today's society. Therefore, acceleration will be provided for all students who do not demonstrate mastery in the tested areas.

#### ***Grades 3-9***

House Bill 3 passed by the 81st Texas Legislature approved new state assessment for students entering grades 3-9 beginning in 2011-12. The most updated information concerning the new assessment, STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness), can be found on the Mesquite ISD website.

#### ***Grades 10 and 11***

Senate Bill 1 passed by the 74th Texas Legislature remains in effect for students in grade 10 and 11.

Tenth-grade students are tested in English language arts, math, science, and social studies.

Eleventh-grade students are tested in English language arts, math, science, and social studies and are required to demonstrate satisfactory performance on these exit-level assessments to receive a high school diploma.

Students who have earned 18 credits by the end of the current spring semester or students who have not met the standard on the exit-level state assessment are eligible for summer testing. Students who do not perform satisfactorily on all sections of the exit-level test will not be eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies. Students who have not met requirements to receive a

diploma may continue to take the exit-level state assessment at designated testing times although they may no longer be in school. Those who then demonstrate satisfactory performance on all sections of the test will be issued a high school diploma at that time and may participate in the next graduation ceremony. District dress code will be followed for any participant.

In keeping with current state regulations, Mesquite high schools grant only one kind of regular education diploma. The diploma will be awarded to students who have earned the minimum required credits necessary for one of the state approved transcript designations and who have met the passing standard on all parts of the state assessment exit-level exam.

### **Summer Academic Sessions**

#### ***Elementary School (Grades 1-6) [E]***

The purpose of elementary summer school is to provide additional academic support in math and reading for students. Students must meet district criteria to attend and be recommended by their teachers. Students who are retained may attend summer school, but this will not change the placement decision for the next year. Dress code must be followed. Tuition is required. Elementary summer school is available only to MISD-enrolled students.

#### ***Middle School (Grades 7-8) [M]***

Students who do not meet the requirements for promotion are required to attend the summer academic session. Students may recoup throughout the school year and if necessary complete their extended year requirements in the summer. The purpose of the extended year program is to enable a student to receive accelerated instruction in a subject(s) where deficiencies were noted during the regular school year. Students may not enroll in the extended year program in more than two subjects. Standard dress is mandatory and tuition is required.

#### ***High School [H]***

The purpose of the extended year summer school is to enable the students to make up courses failed, to earn extra units they may need for college entrance, or to enrich their backgrounds. The local summer program will continue to operate within Texas Education Agency guidelines and is primarily funded on a tuition basis.

Summer school students are reminded that the school district's general disciplinary policies and dress and grooming code are enforced in the summer school.

Course offerings are based upon student needs and meet the standards of the regular term except where special provisions may apply. No grade points are awarded for summer school courses.

The Minimum Attendance for Class Credit Rule also applies to summer school.

In order for credit earned in summer school to apply toward local graduation requirements, Mesquite students are required to earn such credit in the Mesquite summer school, in an accredited public school, or in a private school recognized by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission.

If any student is dropped for disciplinary reasons, there will be no refund of the tuition fee. If the student withdraws for reasons other than disciplinary, each case is handled on its merit, but in no event will the full amount be refunded once a student has completed registration.

### **Transcript Designations [H]**

The individual student's academic achievement record (transcript) will reflect one of several possible programs to be completed for graduation. The student's transcript will bear a seal indicating the completion of the appropriate graduation program.

### **Transcripts**

The school maintains as complete a set of records as possible to assist in student guidance. The Academic Achievement Record (transcript) for each student enrolled lists complete personal student data and gives complete scholastic grades, a report of attendance, activities, honors and scores on standardized achievement tests.

Every student who graduates is entitled to two free transcripts. For each additional transcript, a charge of one dollar is made. This fee must be paid at the time the request is made.

### **Transferring from Non-Accredited High Schools [H]**

Students from non-accredited high schools will be classified and admitted temporarily by the registrar with the approval of the Principal. Credit is to be established by the rules of the Texas Education Agency.

### **Tutorials**

Certain circumstances will warrant that students be required to participate in tutoring sessions.

# *Extracurricular Activities, Clubs & Organizations*

## **Clubs and Organizations**

The clubs and organizations of Mesquite high schools are considered to be part of school activities. These activities are designed to meet the varied interests of the student body. Student interest is a primary factor in the addition or deletion of student activities. All students are encouraged to participate and take an active part in these activities.

The administration must approve any plan or activity used by a class or organization for making money. Only activities that raise money through payment of admissions or where value is received for money paid may be used. No advertising will be sold without the approval of the administration.

Only MISD-approved clubs and organizations will be featured in the yearbook.

Only students enrolled full time in MISD schools may participate in MISD-sponsored activities.

For a student to be eligible to serve as class officer, student council officer, honor society officer or in any other capacity respected as an honor position, he/she must be passing in all subjects and have satisfactory citizenship grades. Unsatisfactory conduct while in office and/or failure to render satisfactory service shall be considered grounds for removal from said office. Removal from office shall be at the discretion of the head sponsor of the organization with the approval of the principal.

## **Extracurricular Eligibility**

At the end of any grade evaluation period, a student who receives an average grade below 70 in any academic class, other than a specified honors or advanced class, or a student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the Individual Education Plan (IEP), may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three weeks. A student may practice or rehearse while suspended. The student regains eligibility when the Principal and teacher determine that he or she has (1) earned a passing grade in all academic classes other than those specified honors or advanced and (2) completed three weeks of suspension.