2026-2027

Hernando Middle School Student and Parent Handbook

Grade 6-8

Principal's Message

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year at Hernando Middle School. This handbook is provided to ensure that all students and families are well-informed of our policies, procedures, and expectations. Taking the time to review and understand these guidelines is essential, as they reflect the standards we uphold daily.

It is with great pride that I serve as the principal of HMS, home of the Tigers. At Hernando Middle School, we are committed to excellence, integrity, growth, and leadership in all that we do. These are not just words; they are expectations for how we learn, lead, and treat one another each day.

Administration

Jennifer Hodges	Principal
Ashley Bynum	Assistant Principal
Thomas Hurst	Assistant Principal
Allison Stanford	Assistant Principal
Brittney Weatherly	Bookkeeper
Erin Hill	ADA
Melba Quesada	MSIS
Dawn Forsyth	Front Desk
Lorrie Brazier	8th Grade Counselor
Paula Simpson	7th Grade Counselor
Lelia Ferguson	6th Grade Counselor

School Hours: 7:10 – 2:30

Parents – Students may not be dropped off and will not be allowed to enter the building until 6:45 AM. Students must be picked up by 2:50 PM each day. There will be no supervision before 6:45 PM or after 2:50 PM. No checkouts after 2:00 PM.

All car riders are dropped off and picked up in the car rider line on the west side of the building. They must enter and exit through the gym lobby doors. Bus riders will enter the building through the exterior gym doors and exit through the front entrance.

BELL SCHEDULE		
Section	6th & 7th Grade	8th Grade
Doors Open	6:45 AM	6:45 AM
Homeroom	7:10 AM - 7:20 AM	7:10 AM - 7:20 AM
Tardy Bell	7:20 AM	7:20 AM
Block 1	7:20 AM - 8:56 AM	7:20 AM - 9:00 AM
Transition to Block 2	8:56 AM - 9:00 AM	9:00 AM - 9:04 AM
Block 2	9:00 AM - 10:36 AM	9:04 AM - 10:40 AM
Transition/Hold	10:36 AM - 10:40 AM	10:40 AM - 10:44 AM
Block 3	10:40 AM - 12:50 PM	10:44 AM - 12:50 PM
Lunch Wave 1	10:40 AM - 11:05 AM	
Lunch Wave 2	11:15 AM - 11:40 AM	
Lunch Wave 3	11:50 AM - 12:15 PM	
Lunch Wave 4	12:25 PM - 12:50 PM	
Transition to Block 4	12:50 PM - 12:54 PM	12:50 PM - 12:54 PM
Block 4	12:54 PM - 2:30 PM	12:54 PM - 2:30 PM
Dismissal	2:30 PM	2:30PM

DCS CALENDAR

2026-2027

July 28, 2026	Teachers' First Day
August 3, 2026	Students' First Day
September 7, 2026	Labor Day Holiday
October 5-9, 2026	Fall Break
November 23-27, 2026	Thanksgiving Break
December 18, 2026	60% Day/End of 1st Semester
Dec. 21, 2026 – Jan. 1, 2027	Christmas Break
January 4-5, 2027	Staff Development
January 6, 2027	Students' Return
January 18, 2027	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
February 15, 2027	Presidents' Day Holiday
March 8-12, 2027	Spring Break
March 26, 2027	Good Friday Holiday
March 29, 2027	Easter Break
May 25, 2027	Students' Last Day
May 26, 2027	Teachers' Last Day
May 31, 2027	Memorial Day Holiday

Tentative Make-Up Days: February 15, March 29, May 26, May 27, May 28

Progress Reports

The weeks of: September 8, November 9, February 1, April 19

Report Cards

October 15th, January 7th, March 25th, May 25th

DESOTO COUNTY BOARD POLICY

The DeSoto County School Board policy is subject to change. When changes are made, parents will be informed by written notice and postings on the Desoto County Schools website. The policy in its entirety can be found for viewing at www.desotocountyschools.org

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Each student in the DeSoto County School District will have equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, sex, handicap, religion or marital status. No student shall be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, athletics, counseling, employment assistance, or extra-curricular activities.

Further, the DeSoto County School District prohibits sexual harassment of or by any student. This policy applies to conduct during and relating to school and school-sponsored activities. Any student who engages in the sexual harassment of anyone in the school setting may be subject to disciplinary action.

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The term "minor" when used in any statute, shall include any person, male or female, under twenty-one years of age. Ms Code 1-3-27

DeSoto County School District shall comply with the requirements of the "Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance Law" (Ms Code 37-13-91). Appropriate reports as required by law shall be provided to the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Compulsory School Attendance Enforcement.

COMPULSORY- SCHOOL-AGE CHILD

"Compulsory-school-age child" means a child who has attained or will attain the age of six (6) years on or before September 1 of the calendar year and who has not attained the age of seventeen (17) years on or

before September 1 of the calendar year; and shall include any child who has attained or will attain the age of five (5) years on or before September 1 and has enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program. A child, five (5) years of age, who enrolls in public kindergarten, will have to abide by the same guidelines as outlined in Ms Code 37-13-91.

Compulsory-school-age children must be enrolled in school unless the child is:

1. Physically, mentally or emotionally incapable of attending school as determined by the appropriate school official based upon sufficient medical documentation;
2. Enrolled in and pursuing a course of special education, remedial education or education for handicapped or physically or mentally disadvantaged children; or
3. Being educated in a legitimate home instruction program. Ms Code 37-13-91 (3)

REPORTS

If a compulsory-school-age child has not been enrolled in school within fifteen (15) calendar days after the first day of the school year or if a child has accumulated five (5) unlawful absences during the school year, the superintendent or his/her designee, shall report, on the form provided by the State Department of Education, by the close of business the next business day, the absences to the school attendance officer. The superintendent, or his/her designee, shall report any student suspensions or student expulsions to the school attendance officer when they occur. Ms Code 37-13-91 (6)

School districts shall maintain accurate records documenting enrollment and attendance in a manner that allows the State Department of Education to make an assessment of changes in enrollment and attendance, including dropout rates.

The State Department of Education shall compile annually a statewide report on school district effectiveness in reducing absentee problems, dropout rates, and other attendance-related problems during the previous school year, incorporate the information into the annual Mississippi Report Card required by Section 37-3-53, Mississippi Code of 1972, on school district performance and offer technical assistance and coordination services to assist districts in improving performance.

UNLAWFUL ABSENCES / VALID EXCUSES

An "unlawful absence" is an absence during a school day by a compulsory-school-age child, which

absence is not due to a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance. Days missed from school due to disciplinary suspension shall not be considered an "excused" absence under this section. Each of the following shall constitute a valid excuse for temporary nonattendance, provided satisfactory evidence of the excuse is provided to the principal or his/her designee:

a. Attendance at an authorized school activity with the prior approval of the principal of the school district or his/her designee. These activities may include field trips, athletic contests, student conventions, musical festivals, and any similar activity.

b. Illness or injury which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school, and any absence after the third, must be documented by a written excuse by a medical provider.

c. When isolation is ordered by the county health officer, by the State Board of Health or appropriate school official.

d. Death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family, which includes children, spouse, grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers and stepsisters.

e. A medical or dental appointment with a documented excuse from the medical provider.

f. Attendance at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.

g. Observance of a religious event, with the prior approval of the principal or his/her designee. (Approval should not be withheld unless, in the professional judgment of the principal or his/her designee, the extent of the absence would adversely affect the student's education.)

h. Participation in a valid educational opportunity, such as travel including vacations or other family travel, with the prior approval of the principal or his/her designee. (Approval shall be based on the professional judgment of the principal or his/her designee.)

i. Other conditions sufficient to warrant nonattendance, with prior approval of the principal or his/her designee. However, no absences shall be excused when any student suspensions or expulsions circumvent the intent and spirit of the compulsory attendance law. Ms Code 37-13-91 (4)

j. An absence is excused when it results from the attendance of a compulsory-school-age child participating in official organized events sponsored by the 4-H or Future Farmers of America (FFA). The excuse for the 4-H or FFA event must be provided in writing to the appropriate school superintendent by the Extension Agent or High School Agricultural Instructor/FFA Advisor.

k. An absence is excused when it results from the compulsory-school-age child officially being employed to serve as a page at the State Capitol for the Mississippi House of Representatives or Senate.

LIMITATION ON EXCUSED ABSENCES

Unless an exception applies, no student shall be granted more than five (5) excused absences per semester. Any additional excused absences beyond this limit must be specifically approved by the superintendent, or his or her designee, upon a showing of extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

1. Prolonged illness or injury supported by medical documentation,

2. Extended religious observance,

3. Participation in education opportunities of substantial merit, including out-of-state educational travel.

Any absence in excess of this limit, and not approved by the superintendent, shall be considered unexcused.

School-sanctioned events, such as athletics, band, choir, or other events sponsored by the Mississippi High School Activities Association, shall not be counted as absences. School-sanctioned academic or club events shall not be counted as absences.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

A compulsory-school-age child shall be considered chronically absent if the child is absent from school for ten percent (10%) or more of the student's school days in a school year, regardless of whether such absences are excused or unexcused.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER

The superintendent and principals shall cooperate with the school attendance officer employed by the State Department of Education, pursuant to Ms Code 37-13-85.

The Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards for this policy are standards 10 and 11.

Attendance

The administrative regulations in this policy are based on all applicable state laws governing absenteeism and tardiness and shall include (but not limited to) the counting and reporting of students to the Mississippi Department of Education for attendance purposes, expectations for good student attendance, parent responsibility, excused and unexcused absences, and tardiness. Initial administrations regulations and any future changes to such administrative regulations shall be reviewed (approved) by the school board before implementation.

Attendance Reporting: In order for a student to be considered as having attended school for a full day, the school board specifies that each student must be present for 66% of his or her individual Instructional school day as defined by the State Board of Education.

The superintendent shall develop and submit for board adoption a policy which includes:

1. a definition of the instructional day for each individual school so that the 66% of the instructional day can be computed for each student within the school district's individual schools, and

2. a process for computing 66% of the instructional day for each student within the school district's individual schools.

Definitions

Full Day Attendance: When a student is present for 66% of his or her individual Instructional day as fixed by the local school board for each individual school.

Unlawful Absence: An absence for an entire school day or during part of a school day when such absence is not due to a valid excuse.

K-12 Students

- Five (5) absences may be excused by a note from a parent/guardian according to the "Unlawful Absences/Valid Excuses" section of policy JBA. (Note must include student's legal name, date of absence, reason for absence, parent/guardian signature, and date note was written.)
- Any additional absence after the five (5) excused by a parent/guardian note must be excused according to the "Limitation on Excused Absences" section of policy JBA.

- Any documentation being given for excuse of absence(s) must be submitted to the principal or his/her designee within two (2) school days of returning to school, unless granted an exception by the principal for extenuating circumstances.
- When a student has exceeded five (5) unexcused absences, the DeSoto County Attendance Officer shall be notified by the close of business the next business day by the school principal or his/her designee.

Make-up Work Policy

When a student is absent from school (excused or unexcused), the number of days allowed to complete any required make-up work is commensurate with the number of days missed to a maximum of five (5) days.

For example, if a student is absent from school for one (1) day, the student has one (1) day to complete the required make-up assignments. If the student is absent for five (5) days, he/she will have five (5) days to complete his/her make-up work. If the student is absent for twelve (12) days, the student has five (5) days to complete the missed work.

The principal has the discretion to allow additional time or limit the number of required assignments in extreme situations.

GRADING POLICY

GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR GRADING

Minimum Standards

Students must demonstrate mastery of the content required for each grade/course.

Content for grades 1-5 is determined by the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards for Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

Content for grades 6-12 is determined by Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards for Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and the Mississippi Content Frameworks for all remaining subjects.

Monitoring Student Progress

Each teacher has the responsibility of identifying pupils who are not making satisfactory progress toward the achievement of grade level or course objectives.

Teachers are encouraged to notify parents during each grading period if students do not meet minimum requirements. Progress Reports will be sent at week four or week five of the nine-week period.

Teachers are not required by district policy to take a specified number of grades. However, any grades taken must be posted to the electronic grade book bi-weekly.

The following guidelines apply to all subject areas:

1. The DeSoto County School District requires that the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards for Language Arts and Mathematics and the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks for all other subject areas be included in the course scope and sequence.
2. High Quality Instructional Materials are utilized for instruction, ongoing progress monitoring, and assessment of standards mastery.

DeSoto County Schools Grading Scale

A – 90 - 100

B – 80 - 89

C – 70 - 79

D – 65 - 69

F – 0 - 64

Kindergarten science and social studies skills are assessed within the reading standards.

For first, second, and third grade science and social studies, the following grading scale is used:

S – Satisfactory

N – Needs Improvement

U – Unsatisfactory

GRADING POLICY

Kindergarten

Kindergarten students must master 70% of the Mathematics standards and 70% of the Language Arts standards.

Grades 1-5

Each nine-week grade is computed by averaging the grades for those nine weeks. This average will be a compilation of the grades that the teacher has for the student in his/her gradebook including, but not limited to, formative assessments, quizzes, classwork, unit tests, common assessments, etc.

The semester grade is computed by averaging the two nine-week grades. The yearly grade is computed by averaging the two semester grades.

The grading policy for students with disabilities with current Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) will be consistent with policy IHFA.

Grades 6-8

Each semester grade is computed by averaging the grades for that semester. Ninety percent (45%-first nine weeks; 45%-second nine weeks) of the grade will be a compilation of the grades that the teacher has for the student in his/her grade book including, but not limited to, formative assessments, quizzes, homework, classwork, unit tests, etc. Ten percent of the grade will be the grade received on the nine-week/semester exam. The final grade for a course will be computed by averaging the two semester grades.

Nine-week tests will be administered for the first and third nine weeks. Semester exams will be administered for the second and fourth nine weeks.

7th and 8th Grade Accelerated English courses will be weighted at 1.05.

Seventh grade Compacted Math will be weighted at 1.05.

Eighth grade Accelerated Math will be weighted at 1.05.

Exemption Policy (Grades 6-7)

Students in grades 6-7 may be exempt from final exams if the following criteria are met:

1. The student has a ninety-five (95) or above yearly average in the course;
2. The student has an eighty-five (85) or above yearly average and does not have more than five (5) days/periods unexcused absences for the year in the course;
3. The student has not been assigned to ALC/RAMP for more than 10 days and has not been suspended and/or placed in DCAC or JDC at any time during the school year.
4. Excused absences will not impact course exemptions.

Grade 8

Students in grade 8 may be exempt from final exams if the following criteria are met:

1. The student has a ninety-five (95) or above yearly average for full year courses and/or a ninety-five (95) or above semester average in semester courses.
2. The student has an eighty-five (85) or above yearly average for full year courses and/or an eighty-five (85) or above semester average in semester courses and does not have more than five (5) days/periods unexcused absences for the year in the course.
3. The student has not been assigned to ALC/RAMP for more than 10 days and has not been suspended and/or placed in DCAC or JDC at any time during the school year.
4. Excused absences will not impact course exemptions.

Grades 9-12

Each term grade is computed by averaging the grades for that term. Eighty percent of the grade will be a compilation of the grades that the teacher has for the student in his/her grade book including, but not limited to, formative assessments, quizzes, homework, classwork, unit tests, mid-term tests, etc. Twenty percent of the grade will be the grade received on the end of course final exam for half credit courses and end of term exams for full credit courses. In full credit courses, the final grade will be the average of the two term grades.

Advanced Courses, Advanced Placement Courses, and Dual Enrollment/Credit Courses will be weighted as outlined in policy IHEA.

Exemption Policy (Grades 9-12)

Students in grades 9-12 may be exempt from end of course final exams for full credit and half credit courses if the following criteria are met:

1. The student has a ninety-five (95) or above semester/term average in the course;
2. The student has an eighty-five (85) or above average and does not have more than four (4) days/periods unexcused absences for final exams in full credit courses;
3. The student had an eighty-five (85) or above average and does not have more than two (2) days/periods unexcused absences for final exams in half credit courses;
4. Student has not been assigned to an Alternative Learning Center (ALC) for more than five (5) days, has not been suspended and/or placed in DeSoto County Alternative Center (DCAC) or the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) at any time during the semester (August-December or January-May).
5. Excused absences will not impact course exemptions.

Grade Revisions

In accordance with House Bill 696 and State Board Policy 403, DeSoto County Schools will follow the following guidelines regarding the changing of student grades.

Any change of grades, other than the final grade, shall be addressed with the teacher who issued the grade and the building level administrator.

Any change of a final grade (as recorded on the cumulative folder or permanent record) shall be presented and approved by a panel consisting of, at a minimum, the teacher issuing the grade, the building level administrator, and a central office administrator.

Written documentation (which includes the signatures of all panel members) of all actions must be included in the cumulative folder and available for review by the Mississippi Department of Education. Any changes or corrections must be made on the cumulative folder and permanent record as required by the Mississippi Cumulative Folders and Permanent Records Manual of Directions.

DeSoto County Schools does not mandate or require the awarding of a minimum grade.

PROMOTION/RETENTION

Kindergarten:
Students must meet the following requirements to be promoted to the next grade:

- Exhibit an adequate level of reading proficiency.*
- Master 70% of the English/Language Arts Standards
- Master 70% of the Mathematics Standards

* Diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment and classroom data may be used to determine a student's reading proficiency.

First and Second Grade:
Students must meet the following requirements to be promoted to the next grade level:

- A minimum yearly average of 65 in English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

Third Grade:
Students must meet the following requirements to be promoted to the fourth grade:

- A minimum yearly average of 65 in English/Language Arts and Mathematics
- Successful completion of the Literacy Based Promotion Act as outlined in Senate Bill 2347

Fourth Grade – Eighth Grade:
Students must meet the following requirements to be promoted to the next grade:

- 4th - 7th Grade- A minimum yearly average of 65 in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.
- 8th Grade- A minimum yearly average of 65 in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and .5 credit of Social Studies. (In-state and out-of-state eighth grade transfers who are not eligible to receive .5 credit in Social Studies due to missing the required seat time, may be promoted if the average of their Social Studies transfer grades is a 65.)

Ninth – Twelfth Grade:
Promotion in grades 9-12 is based upon earning Carnegie units. A Carnegie unit or half-unit is earned when a student completes the course with an average of 65 or better. Half-units are earned in courses designed to be completed in nine weeks. (Refer to Classification of Students – IEDB)

The high school academic program in the DeSoto County School District requires four (4) full years or eight (8) semesters of work. Students may not take courses that are sequential in nature until the proper prerequisites have been successfully completed. (For example, a student may not take Algebra II without having passed Algebra I) Exceptions to this rule may be made for seniors who may be permitted to take two (2) sequential classes simultaneously.

The retention of a student for extracurricular purposes is prohibited.

DESOTO COUNTY SCHOOLS CODE OF DISCIPLINE

FORWARD

The Uniform Discipline Code has been developed in consultation with students, parents, teachers, and administrators so they will know and understand that firm, fair and consistent discipline policies are to be maintained in all DeSoto County public schools. Use of this Code is intended to ensure a stable learning environment in an atmosphere which encourages academic excellence. It is expected that staff members, students and parents will work together to support and enforce the code regulations with equity and consistency for all students.

A copy of this Code shall be distributed to each student and the parents, legal guardian or custodian of each such student shall sign a statement verifying that they have been given notice of the Code.

INTRODUCTION

The uniform Discipline Code of the DeSoto County Schools provides a uniform standard of conduct for all public school students. It describes inappropriate student behavior, ensures equal treatment for misconduct, and presets specific actions for remediating prohibited behaviors. The Code is based on the premise that rules must be enforced fairly, firmly and consistently and in a fashion equitable and just, while complying with state mandates and regulations. It recognizes that as students progress in school and advance in age and maturity, they will assume greater responsibility for their actions. It is also recognized that differences in age and maturity require different types of disciplinary action.

In this Code, discipline is defined as the implementation of and adherence to behavioral rules and regulations which will ensure an educational environment free of mental and physical hazards to students, teachers and staff. Such an environment is conducive to the practice of good citizenship and encourages learning. The enforcement of the Code will help ensure a safe and orderly school climate for students and staff alike.

Specific provisions of the Code include:

1. A parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory school age child enrolled in the DeSoto County Schools shall be responsible financially for his or her minor child's destructive acts against school property or persons.

2. A parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory school age child enrolled in the DeSoto County Schools may be requested to appear at school by the school attendance officer or the principal, for a conference regarding the destructive acts of their child, or for any other discipline conference regarding the acts of the child.

3. Any parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory school age child enrolled in the DeSoto County Schools who refuses or willfully fails to attend such discipline conference specified in paragraph (2) of this section may be summoned by proper notification by the superintendent of schools or the school attendance officer and be required to attend such discipline conference.

4. A parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory school age child enrolled in the DeSoto County Schools shall be responsible for any criminal fines brought against such student for unlawful activity occurring on school grounds or buses.

5. Any parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory school age child who

    1. fails to attend a discipline conference to which such parent, guardian or custodian has been summoned under the provisions of this section, or

    2. refuses or willfully fails to perform any other duties imposed upon him or her under the law shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction shall be fined not to exceed an amount provided by law.

6. The DeSoto County Schools shall be entitled to recover damages in an amount not to exceed an amount as provided by law, plus necessary court costs, from the parents of any minor (7-17) who maliciously and willfully damages or destroys property belonging to this school district. However, this section shall not apply to parents whose parental control of such child has been removed by court order or decree.

7. As an alternative to suspension, a student may remain in school by having the parent, guardian or custodian, with the consent of the student's teacher or teachers, attend class with the student for a period of time specifically agreed upon by the teacher and school principal. If the parent, guardian or custodian does not agree to attend class with the student or fails to attend class with the student, the student shall be suspended in accordance with this Code.

CODE OF DISCIPLINE
GRADES K-12

Student Conduct:

Acts of Misconduct
These acts of misconduct include those student behaviors which disrupt the orderly educational process in the classroom or on the school grounds including the following:

Level I

1 – 1 Tardiness

1 – 2 Running and/or making excessive noise in the hall or building

1 – 3 Inappropriate personal contact including but not limited to pushing and shoving, inappropriate gestures and public displays of affection, recklessness, or any inappropriate contact which does not result in physical harm, or any additional contact which the principal determines to be in this level.

1 – 4 In unauthorized area without pass (halls, etc.)

1 – 5 Dress code violation

* 1 – 6 Displaying any behavior which is disruptive to the orderly process of education

Disciplinary Action

First Violation

Minimum: Teacher-Student Conference

Maximum: Teacher-Student-Parent Conference

Repeated or Flagrant Violation

Minimum: Teacher-Student-Administrator-Parent Conference (Home Suspension)

Maximum: Corporal Punishment, in-school suspension, detention, and/or school suspension

* Students, who after having a student-teacher conference, a teacher-student-parent conference, home suspension, Teacher Support Team interventions, continue displaying behavior which is disruptive to the orderly process of education, can be suspended from school, pending a disciplinary hearing.

Level II

* 2 – 1 Leaving the school grounds without permission

* 2 – 2 Skipping class

* 2 – 3 Insubordination - refusal to follow written or verbal school rules after receiving specific directions from a person in authority including, but not limited to breaking school or classroom rules, failure to

respond to staff request, refusal to complete assigned task, or exhibiting disrespect towards adults.

* 2 – 4 Students shall not possess, smoke, or use tobacco or any product containing tobacco or nicotine while on campus, while attending school-sponsored activities, or while under the supervision and control of district employees. This includes the possession and/or use of any electronic device that delivers nicotine or other vaporized liquids to the person inhaling from the device, including but not limited to electronic cigarettes, vapes, vaporizers, cigars, pipes, hookahs, or any electronic device that delivers nicotine or other vaporized liquids to the person inhaling from the device.

* 2 – 5 Exhibiting any hostile physical or verbal actions

**2 - 6 Unauthorized and/or inappropriate use of electronic devices (as defined in Board Policy IJBA).

2 - 7 Cheating on tests or exams (The grade "0" will be assigned regardless of other punishment).

Disciplinary Action

First Violation

Minimum: Administrator-Conference, ALC, mandatory student-parent-administrator conference, corporal punishment

Maximum: School suspension (one to three days)

Repeated or Flagrant Violation

Minimum: School suspension (three days)

Maximum: School suspension (three days) and/or ALC for up to ten (10) days and/or Teacher Support Team interventions

* Students who, after having a student-teacher conference, a teacher-student-parent conference, a mandatory student-parent-administrator conference, and Teacher Support Team interventions, and a Functional Behavior Assessment, continue displaying behavior which is disruptive to the orderly process of education, can be suspended from school, pending a disciplinary hearing.

** Additional disciplinary action for unauthorized and/or inappropriate use of personal electronic devices (as defined in Board Policy IJBA):

1st Offense:	First offense will result in confiscation of the device with parental contact. The electronic device will be returned at the end of the school day to the student or his/her parent/guardian as determined by the building principal.
2nd Offense:	Second offense will result in confiscation of the electronic device and a mandatory parent/administrator conference. The electronic device will not be returned directly to the student; parent/guardian must meet with a school-level administrator to collect the electronic device.
3rd Offense:	Third offense will be considered repeated and/or flagrant and the penalty for such acts will be determined by the building administrator. The phone will be confiscated and penalties could include, but are not limited to the following: • Check-in/Check-out procedures for the electronic device during the school day (1-10 days) • ALC/In-School Suspension (1-3 days)
4th Offense:	Fourth offense will result in school suspension (1-3 days), and a loss of electronic device privileges pending reinstatement by the building principal.

Level III

3 – 1 Fighting

3 – 2 Gambling

* 3 – 3 Theft of personal and/or school property

3 – 4 Acts which threaten the safety and well-being of students and/or staff: engaging in any behavior (by word or act) that encourages, incites, or instigates threatening or aggressive acts which can create the risk of harm to another person.

3 – 5 Extortion- use of intimidation, coercion or force

* 3 – 6 Vandalism of personal and/or school property

3 – 7 Using profane, obscene, indecent, immoral, or offensive language and/or gestures, and/or possession of obscene, indecent, immoral, or offensive materials.

3 – 8 Sexual conduct, including unwelcomed sexual contact, or recording and/or transferring sexually suggestive images through personal electronic devices.

3-9 Bullying (as defined in Board Policy JDDA)

Disciplinary Action

First Violation

Minimum: School suspension from one to three days, ALC, corporal punishment

Maximum: School suspension (three days), report to authorities when applicable

Repeated or Flagrant Violation

Minimum: School suspension (three days), ALC (ten days), and/or Levels 3-4 and 3-8 Teacher Support Team interventions

Maximum: School suspension (three days) and possible assignment to DeSoto County Alternative Center pending the results of a disciplinary hearing.

* For theft or vandalism restitution shall be made regardless of other punishment

Level IV

4 – 1 Possession, use or under the influence of alcohol, synthetic drugs, counterfeit drugs, illegal drugs, narcotics, controlled substance(s) or paraphernalia.

4 – 2 Assault on a student. Assault is defined as purposely or recklessly causing or attempting to cause bodily injury (including pain or discomfort) to another.

4 – 3 Assault on a school employee. Assault is defined as purposely or recklessly causing or attempting to cause bodily injury (including pain or discomfort) to another.

4 – 4 Directing profanity, vulgar or threatening language, and/or obscene gestures toward a staff member.

4 - 5 Participating in sexual activity including but not limited to sexual intercourse, sexual contact or exposing intimate body parts while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property.

Any student in violation of the above shall be suspended by the principal for three days and ordered to appear for a disciplinary hearing before a District Hearing Officer.

Disciplinary Action

Minimum: Assignment to the DeSoto County Alternative Center and a report will be made to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Maximum: Expulsion

Students below grade 6 may be given other punishment.

Level V

5 – 1 Possession and/or use of a weapon as defined in MS CODE § 97-37-17. Weapons possession on educational property. The definition of weapon for the sake of this policy also includes any instrument used as a weapon which is capable of causing death or serious physical injury. Also, any toy or look-alike weapon that looks enough like an authentic weapon to be reasonably mistaken as authentic. Examples of weapons include, but are not limited to guns, rifles, pistols, toy guns, knives, toy knives, craft knives, utility tools, scissors, air or gas operated weapons, AirSoft pistols, BB guns, air rifle, air pistol, daggers, slingshots, razors, dynamite cartridges, bombs, grenades, mines, etc.

Disciplinary Action

Minimum: Possession other than gun will result in assignment to the DeSoto County Alternative Center and a report will be made to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Maximum: Possession of a fire arm/gun or use of other weapon will result in expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year (under certain circumstances expulsion can be from the student's assigned school to the DeSoto County Alternative Center).

For students below grade 6, the hearing officer may recommend other punishment if the behavior does not require expulsion and the student is likely to benefit from remediation.

5 – 2 Sale or distribution, or conspiring to sell counterfeit drugs, synthetic drugs, illegal drugs/alcohol, narcotics or controlled substance(s)

Disciplinary Action

Minimum: Assignment to the DeSoto County Alternative Center and a report will be made to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Maximum: Expulsion

For students below grade 6, the hearing officer may recommend other punishment if the behavior does not require expulsion and the student is likely to benefit from remediation.

5 – 3 Students are prohibited from wearing, displaying, or possessing in any manner on school property or at school-sponsored events clothing, apparel, accessories, drawings, or messages associated with any gang or social club that is associated with criminal activity, as defined by law enforcement agencies.

Disciplinary Action

Minimum: Mandatory student/parent/resource officer/administrator meeting to investigate situation and determine proper discipline consequence.

Repeated: Assignment to the DeSoto County Alternative Center

Maximum: Expulsion for repeated violations and/or gang activity that includes but is not limited to:

- Acts which disrupt the process of orderly education
- Recruitment with use of intimidation

- Tagging or marking
- Assault
- Battery

For students below grade 6, the hearing officer may recommend other punishment if the behavior does not require expulsion and the student is likely to benefit from remediation.

5-4 Threats of violence or harm: Any spoken, written, gestured or electronically communicated threat that disrupts the educational environment of the school and/or suggests a student intends to cause bodily harm or carry out an act of violence against district property, students, employees, or others (e.g. bomb threats, school shooting threats, etc...).

Disciplinary Action

Students found to have made threats of violence or harm against district property, students, employees or others will be subject to expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year (under certain circumstances expulsion can be from the student's assigned school to the DeSoto County Alternative Center).

In addition to these penalties, provisions of the Mississippi Criminal Code are applicable to illegal behavior. Principals are required to report illegal activities to the police. Students committing any crime or involved with any criminal behavior are subject to arrest by local law enforcement.

The DeSoto County Board of Education permits individual schools to adopt additional regulations governing actions not covered by Conduct Code. However, such additional regulations may neither substitute for nor negate any of the provisions, in spirit or intent of the Conduct Code, and must be approved in writing by the School Superintendent.

DUE PROCESS

In cases where the imposition of punishment is for a suspension of three (3) days or less, the student will be orally informed of the charges lodged against him. The student shall have a right to respond and refute these charges. There may be a delay between the time that "notice" is given and the time of the parent/student right to respond. A parent will be notified of the suspension by telephone, if possible, and in writing. The student's parent/guardian has a right to discuss this matter further and have the charge and punishment explained by the administration along with all other rights provided by board policy.

DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

When a student appears before a disciplinary hearing, the student will be subject to additional punishment up to and including suspension of more than three (3) days, assignment to an alternative educational setting for more than ten (10) days, or an expulsion from school.

For additional information on due process and disciplinary hearings, please refer to Board Policy JDAAAA - Disciplinary Procedures.

ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

After a student is referred for consideration of placement at DeSoto County Alternative Center (DCAC), the District Review Board and Transition team will determine appropriate placement for the student. Once a student is accepted into DCAC, the District Review Board and Transition Team will develop an Individualized Instruction Plan (IIP) for each student. The plan will follow the program and class schedule of the home school. DCAC follows the frameworks that are established by the state of Mississippi for the subject matter to be taught in each course. Certified personnel will send a daily feedback sheet home that requires a parent signature for all students attending DCAC.

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) committee meets to determine every change of placement for our special education students. Students with special education rulings follow their IEP while at DCAC.

Parents are notified of the recommendation for placement at DCAC during the disciplinary hearing. The home school will contact the parent once acceptance is granted by the District Review Board. All parents and students will meet with a DCAC administrator to discuss the DCAC program and requirements. The student shall complete a minimum of thirty (30) successful days prior to returning to his/her home school.

The District Review Board consists of school-level administrators, district-level administrators, and counselors as determined by the Director of Pupil Services.

FELONY CHARGES AND CONVICTIONS FOR OFF-CAMPUS CONDUCT

If a student commits a crime off campus and is formally charged with a felony or an act that substantially disrupts or has the potential to disrupt the educational process the student will be recommended for reassignment or expulsion.

GANG POLICY

The DeSoto County School District prohibits gang activity, defined hereinafter. Students who engage in gang activity will be subject to discipline pursuant to the District's Code of Discipline, up to and including possible expulsion.

A "gang" is defined as a group that initiates, advocates, or promotes illegal activities, activities that threaten the safety or well being of persons or property on school grounds, or at supervised school functions, or activities that are harmful to the education process.

Prohibited "gang activity" includes, but is not limited to:

1. Soliciting students to become gang members;
2. Participating in gang initiation or other gang ceremonies;
3. Deliberately wearing, displaying or possessing prohibited gang symbols;
4. Engaging in gang-related violence or threats of violence;
5. Threatening others, including threats by brandishing a weapon or a replica of a weapon on school campuses, or at supervised school functions; or
6. Engaging in any behavior undertaken in such a manner as to be reasonably likely to incite violence or endanger persons or property.

Prohibited "gang symbols" may include any type of clothing decoration, jewelry, patches, bandanas, gang names, depiction of gang signs or symbols, and/or body signal/movement which is recognized as denoting a gang or is a sign, signal or movement utilized in connection with gang communications, including, but not limited to those appearing with the "Gang Awareness" pamphlet attached hereto as well as the additions thereto in the future. School officials will keep a booklet containing known "gang symbols" in each school office. Students and parents who may have questions regarding this policy should contact the school principal for further clarification of any part of the policy.

Students may be disciplined for engaging in any activity prohibited by this policy including the prohibited "gang activity" enumerated in the third paragraph hereof. District officials will cooperate with local law enforcement to provide the school with gang information to aid in the prevention of violence, gangs, and drugs in our schools. This information shall include, but is not limited to: gang names, colors, symbols, signals, and gestures associated with gangs (all of which are prohibited gang activity). Amendments and updates to the list of prohibited gang symbols and gang activity and/or handbook must be submitted to

the Director of Pupil Services for approval. Thereafter, the Director of Pupil Services will distribute the amended and/or updated information to the appropriate district officials.

Each school shall make regular announcements to the student body advising that gang activity and gang symbols are strictly prohibited.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained herein, nothing herein prohibits the display of recognized religious symbols such as the Star of David or the Crescent or the Cross unless these or other religious symbols are altered or augmented in some way.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained herein, wearing of clothing or particular colors in and of itself is not prohibited unless the clothing (color or otherwise) is worn in combination with other prohibited gang signs or symbols. The wearing or displaying in any manner of gang names however, is prohibited.

BUS CONDUCT

The DeSoto County School District Transportation Department operates as an extension of the school(s) and student conduct is governed accordingly. Students who do not conduct themselves properly are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the DeSoto County School District policies. Punishments may include but are not limited to suspension and expulsion from school or from the bus for misconduct on the bus.

DeSoto County Schools only transports students to his/her primary residence. Each parent/guardian upon enrollment is required to establish a primary residence based on the requirements for school admission listed in School Board Policy JBC. DeSoto County Schools does not provide busing to daycares, family daycare homes, group daycare facilities, or the homes of extended family members.

1. Responsibilities:
    1. Bus drivers and aides are responsible and authorized to maintain student order and discipline at all times.
    2. Principals are responsible and authorized to administer any and all necessary student discipline. Principals shall also ensure that all bus rules are communicated to eligible riders.
    3. Students have the responsibility to obey all policies and procedures established by the DeSoto County Board of Education, their respective schools and the Transportation Department while waiting for, boarding, riding or off-loading a DeSoto County School Bus.

4. The Transportation Department shall post rules clearly on every school bus and shall include but not be limited by the rules listed below.

2. Rules of Conduct

    1. Be waiting at your stop 5 minutes early.
    2. If you need to cross the street, wait for traffic to stop; driver will motion to you when it is safe to pass in front of the bus to load or unload.
    3. Obey the bus driver.
    4. No unauthorized items on bus. (No weapons, tobacco, combustibles, pets, large items, etc.)
    5. Be nice and courteous.
    6. Keep the bus clean.
    7. No profanity and no fighting.
    8. Keep hands and head inside of bus.
    9. Do not throw anything, anywhere.
    10. Stay in your seat. Driver may assign seats.
    11. No eating or drinking.
    12. Damage to bus interior may result in student paying for damage.
    13. Emergency door/windows may only be opened in case of emergency.
    14. Do not distract or bother the driver through loud talking or misbehavior.
    15. Report any problems you may have to the bus driver as soon as possible.
    16. School District and drivers are not responsible for articles left on the bus.
    17. Use or possession of gang graffiti, gang drawings, gang writings, gang dress, or gang activity of any kind may result in expulsion from school.

DRESS CODE

Proper attire and grooming are deemed important to scholastic achievement and orderliness. The responsibility for the appearance of the students begins with the parents and the students themselves. Students' clothing, make-up, and hairstyles should reflect neatness, cleanliness, and self-

respect so that the school is a desirable place in which to promote learning and character development.

It is virtually impossible to formulate a set of regulations that adequately covers every detail of proper grooming. Violations of the Dress Code will be dealt with in accordance with the DeSoto County Schools Code of Discipline.

Accessories

1. No article of clothing, jewelry, visible tattoos, or any other fashion accessories that display words or symbols that advocate or depict the following will be acceptable:

- Dress (to include clothing, jewelry, and visible tattoos) that promotes, depicts, threatens, or in any way affirms, explicitly or implicitly, words or symbols that are lewd, offensive, vulgar, obscene, violent, profane, advertise weapons, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or other substances is strictly prohibited.
- Dress (to include clothing, jewelry, and visible tattoos) that displays words or symbols identified as commonly recognized by gangs or that communicate gang affiliation. Gang affiliation, whether expressed or implied, using words or symbols, is prohibited.
- Dress (to include clothing, jewelry, body art, and visible tattoos) that depicts or displays words or symbols that are disruptive, inappropriate, distracting or deemed to be a possible disruption to the educational/instructional process. Hate speech, profanity, and pornography are prohibited.
- Jewelry, including facial or body piercings that are actually or likely to be disruptive, distracting, or deemed hazardous to the safety of students.
- Student clothing deemed disruptive to the school day by the building principals is prohibited.

Head

2. Wearing headgear is prohibited in the building. This includes, but is not limited to, caps, hats, hoodies, hoods, bandanas, wave caps, sunglasses, tiaras/crowns, ski masks, balaclava helmets, or any other head covering. School administration can make exceptions to this rule for religious, medical, or other reasons.

3. Hair must be neat, clean, and worn in a manner that does not interfere with vision or cause a disruption in the school.

Upper Garments

4. No tank tops, halter tops, strapless tops, spaghetti straps, or bare shoulder tops are allowed. Blouses, shirts, and tops not made of opaque (non-see through) material and exposing any portion of the waist,

hips, torso, or midriff are prohibited. (If you raise your arms and the stomach shows or sit down and the lower back is revealed, the top is inappropriate.) Other blouses, shirts, and tops that are not appropriate for school include but are not limited to low-cut, see-through, backless, or tube tops.

Lower Garments

5. No sagging shorts, skirts, or pants are acceptable. Waistlines of shorts, skirts, and pants must be worn on or above the hips/waist. Students must wear sufficient underclothing, which must be worn appropriately and not exposed at or below the waistline.

6. All pants must be worn fitted to the waist, with or without a belt. Pants should fit appropriately.

7. Hems of shorts, skirts, and dresses must not reach above *mid-thigh on a student unless tights, leggings, or another garment are worn and visible underneath.

8. Skirts, dresses, pants, or other outer garments with slits above *mid-thigh are not acceptable unless tights, leggings, or other approved garments are worn and visible underneath.

9. Pants with rips, holes, tears, or frayed fabric that expose undergarments above *mid-thigh are unacceptable unless tights, leggings, stockings, or other approved garments are worn and visible underneath.

10. Spandex pants, jeggings, leggings, yoga pants, exercise pants, and tights may not be worn without an appropriate opaque (non-see through) dress, shorts, skirts, sweater, or top that covers them to the *mid-thigh or longer in both front and back.

11. Any clothing that is sheer, see-through, mesh, and exposes the midsection, back, chest, or other areas that are considered private is strictly prohibited.

Footwear

12. Shoes must always be worn. Inappropriate footwear includes but is not limited to roller skates, skate shoes, and bedroom slippers/house shoes.

Exceptions

13. Costume wear (including tails, ears, masks, hats, etc.) is not allowed to be worn except on special days designated by school administration.

14. No pajamas, blankets, or sleepwear of any kind can be worn at school except on special days designated by the school administration.

15. Coaches, physical education classes, or any organized athletic groups can ban all jewelry for safety reasons and in violation of the Mississippi High School Activity Association regulations.

Administration Autonomy

The local principals or their designee have the autonomy and discretion within the boundaries of this policy to interpret and apply this policy and determine the appropriateness of student school dress and any consequences, including any discipline. Students must adhere to the dress code policy. The administration holds the authority to require a change in clothing if attire is deemed inappropriate. The administration can make exceptions for school-wide events like spirit days and other similar celebrations while maintaining the autonomy to address specific items or styles not listed in the policy that may disrupt or threaten the school environment.

*Mid-thigh is defined as when a student is in the standing position, measuring halfway from the top of the leg (the crease your hip makes when seated) to the top of the knee.

BULLYING OR HARASSING BEHAVIOR

DeSoto County Schools prohibits bullying or harassing behavior of students, school employees, or volunteers. DeSoto County Schools will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no person or school employee is subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by other students or school employees.

DEFINITIONS

Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic that (a) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, or (b) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits.

A “hostile environment” means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

The above conduct constitutes bullying if that conduct interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

Bullying or harassing behavior will not be condoned or tolerated when it takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or when it takes place off school property when such conduct, in the determination of the school superintendent or principal, renders the offending person's presence a disruption to the operation of the educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the pupils and teacher of such class as a whole.

The District encourages anyone who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior to report the incident to the appropriate school official. Retaliation or reprisal against any person, including a victim, a witness, or another person, who in good faith provides information concerning an incident of bullying or harassing behavior, is prohibited.

DeSoto County Schools recognizes the fundamental right of every student to take "reasonable actions" as may be necessary to defend himself or herself from an attack by another student who has evidenced menacing or threatening behavior through bullying or harassing.

"Reasonable action" includes, but is not limited to, promptly reporting the bullying or harassing behavior to a teacher, principal, counselor, or other school employee.

The School Board directs the superintendent or designee to design and implement procedures for reporting, investigation, and addressing bullying and harassing behaviors.

Technology and Instruction/Distance Learning

Terms

All users of district provided laptops, tablets, or other personal computing devices will comply at all times with the DeSoto County School District Technology policies. Any failure to comply may result in termination of user rights of possession effective immediately and the District may repossess the device. Any lost, stolen and damaged devices must be reported to school authorities immediately.

Title

The District has legal title to the property at all times. The user's right of possession and use is limited to and conditioned upon full and complete compliance with this agreement, the DeSoto County School District Technology policies, and all District policies and procedures.

Loss, Theft or Full Damage

If a device is stolen, the parent/guardian (in the case of a student) should immediately notify the school administration. At that time, the user or the parent/guardian will be required to file a police report. Once a police report has been filed, the district, in conjunction with the local law enforcement agency may deploy locating software to aid authorities in recovering the device. It is imperative that a lost or stolen device be reported immediately.

If a device is damaged, lost or stolen, the user or the parent/guardian may be responsible for the full replacement cost or be assessed a deductible for the repair. A chart listing the deductible and fees are included in this policy. The user or the parent/guardian of the device must report to district personnel within three calendar days of missing or damaged device.

Students who leave the district during the school year must return all devices and additional accessories to the school administrator.

Repossession

If the user does not fully comply with all terms of this agreement and the DeSoto County School District Technology policies, including the timely return of the property, DeSoto County School District shall be entitled to declare the user in default and come to the user's place of residence, or other location of the property, to take possession of the property.

Terms of Agreement

The user's right to use and possession of the property terminates no later than the last day of enrollment unless earlier terminated by the DeSoto County School District or upon withdrawal from DeSoto County Schools.

Unlawful Appropriation

Failure to timely return the property and the continued use of it for non-school purposes without the DeSoto County School District's consent may be considered unlawful appropriation of the District's property.

Fees for Device Use

Use and Maintenance Fees

- Parents/Guardians shall pay a non-refundable annual support fee of $25.00 for students grades 6th-12th for the use of a DeSoto County School electronic device.
- Homebound students in grades K-5th will be assessed a $25.00 fee annually for the use of a DeSoto County Electronic device.
- The annual fee can be paid online through a link on the district's website or at the school.
- For damage that occurs to any district device there will be a required deductible to cover damage by incident (i.e. 1st damage, 2nd damage) AND by incident type (i.e. cracked glass, broken LCD, bent frame, etc.).
- If the device is lost, stolen, or damaged beyond repair, the parent/guardian (in the case of a student) may be responsible for the replacement cost. A police/sheriff report will be required for all stolen devices.
- District may disable the device remotely to protect the device and/or data on the device.
- Seniors must clear all records and pay all fees before they shall be allowed to participate in commencement exercises.
- If there are fees that are outstanding, the district may take all legal measures that are available to recoup those fees.

Damaged Devices

Any damage must be reported to school authorities immediately. Power adapters, and sleeves, cases and hotspots must be returned to DeSoto County Schools or paid in full.

Deductibles- Fees

- First damage occurrence: $50.00 deductible to cover damage.
- Second damage occurrence: $50.00 deductible *plus* 25% of the repair cost to repair the laptop and possible loss of take home privileges.
- Third damage occurrence: $50.00 deductible *plus* 50% of the repair cost to repair the laptop and loss of take home privileges.
- Fourth damage occurrence: Fair market value to repair the laptop or tablet.
- Full replacement cost for; computer device/current bid amount, adapter $50.00, case $25.00, hotspot $84.00

Handling and Care

- Keep the device in the district-issued or approved sleeve and case if provided.
- Keep the device and sleeve free of any writing, drawing, stickers, or labels that are not applied by DeSoto County Schools.
- Use the device on a flat, stable surface.
- Do not place books on the device.
- Do not have food or drinks around the device.
- Wipe surfaces with a clean, dry soft cloth.
- Avoid touching the screen with pens or pencils.
- Do not leave the device exposed to direct sunlight or near any heat or moisture sources for extended periods of time.
- Do not remove bar code or existing labels that are on the device.

Power Management

- It is the user's responsibility to recharge the device's battery so it is fully charged by the start of the next school day.
- Devices with no battery life must be charged in the classroom. The student may be required to forfeit use of the device for the entire time it takes to charge it.
- All class work missed because of uncharged batteries must be made up on a student's own time.

Transport

- Transport the device in its protective case and sleeve.
- Do not leave the device in a vehicle for extended periods of time or overnight.
- Do not leave the device in visible sight when left in a vehicle.

Monitoring and Supervision

- Do not leave the device unattended in an unlocked classroom or during an extracurricular activity.
- Do not lend the device to a classmate, friend, or family member. If any person damages the device it will be the user's (parent/guardian in the case of a student) responsibility, and the damage cost policy will be in effect.

- Any attempt to "jailbreak" or remove the DeSoto County School District profile could result in disciplinary action, including suspension.
- Students are responsible for the safety and security of the device and any activity on the device.

User Data

All users are responsible for keeping backups of important data. If a device has to be repaired there may be a need to reset it to the original settings. The technology department will not be responsible for any user data that might be lost as a part of the process.

Help and Support

Each school will have a designated Distance Learning Support Person. An online help ticket will need to be filled out and submitted.

Use of Personal Laptops and Tablets

In grades where students are issued a laptop or tablet by the district, students will not be allowed to use their personal laptops or tablets in place of a district device. The goal of the 1:1 initiative is to provide every student with the same device. If a parent refuses a device for home use, the student will be required to check out a device at school for use each day in class. The district is not able to provide support or install software on personal devices; therefore the use of personal devices is not a viable alternative to a district provided device.

TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOL PROPERTY

The DeSoto County Board of Education bans the use of all tobacco products in all school buildings and property in the district and on all school vehicles by all persons at all times. Tobacco products are defined as any substance that contains tobacco, including but not limited to, vaping, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, smoking tobacco, smokeless tobacco, or electronic cigarettes.

This ban extends to all employees, students, and patrons attending school-sponsored athletic events and meetings and to school-owned or operated vehicles and facilities. The board issues this ban in a sincere appeal to all employees, students and patrons to cooperate in helping to create within our facilities a truly healthy environment for all concerned.

The Federal code states that neither a person nor a federal agency shall permit smoking within any indoor facility owned or leased or contracted for and utilized by such person or agency for provision of routine or

regular kindergarten, elementary, or secondary education or library services to children.

Any failure to comply with a prohibition in this section shall be in violation of this section and any person subject to such prohibition who commits such violation may be liable to the United States for a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed $1,000 for each violation, or may be subject to an administrative compliance order, or both. Each day a violation continues shall constitute a separate violation. In the case of any civil penalty under this section, the total amount shall not exceed the amount of Federal funds received by such person for the fiscal year in which the continuing violations occurred.

NONDISCRIMINATORY STATEMENT

The DeSoto County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups:

Compliance Coordinator

Office of Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

DeSoto County Schools

5 East South Street

Hernando, MS 38632

662-429-5271

The Compliance Coordinator has been designated to address all inquiries regarding the following Federal policies:

Title VI – race, color, ethnicity, and national origin

Title IX – sex and pregnancy

Section 504 of Americans with Disabilities Act

Title II

Age Discrimination Act

Boy Scouts

After initial investigation, all inquiries shall be directed to the appropriate person(s). A thorough investigation shall be conducted in accordance with DeSoto County School Board Policy GAF: Staff Grievances and Complaints.

2026–2027 Hernando Middle School Schoolwide Systems Guide

Teachers • Students • Parents

WHY SYSTEMS MATTER AT HMS

Our systems are designed to:

- Increase student safety
- Protect instructional time
- Create consistency schoolwide
- Reduce confusion and conflict
- Improve student behavior and accountability
- Build a calm, respectful learning environment

These systems are an EVERYONE, EVERYDAY expectation.

HMS CORE MESSAGE

Safe • Orderly • Respectful • Instruction-Focused

At Hernando Middle School, systems are designed to create a school environment where students can learn, teachers can teach, and everyone feels safe, supported, and successful.

Hernando Middle School Dress Code System

Purpose

The goal of this system is to create a respectful, positive, and consistent approach to dress code expectations while minimizing embarrassment, classroom disruption, and power struggles. The focus should remain on student learning, relationships, and maintaining a safe, appropriate school environment.

What it Looks Like:

- Shorts, dresses, and skirts must be fingertip length, when shoulders are relaxed and arms are fully extended at your sides.
- Shreds/holes in jeans must be at or below fingertip length when shoulders are relaxed and arms are fully extended at your sides.
- Tank tops (less than 3 fingers) must only be worn under a shirt

- No cleavage or excessively tight clothing
- No exposure to your midriff or back
- No sagging pants
- No pajama pants or house slippers
- No drug, alcohol, tobacco, or gang related graphics on clothing
- No sexually offensive attire
- Headgear is prohibited in the building. School administration may make exceptions to the rule for religious, medical, or other reasons.

If Student Expectations Are Not Followed:

1. Immediate Adult Response
    - Address the observed dress code violation
    - Ask the student to change or send them to the office to call home for a change of clothes.

2. Student Consequence Progression
    - Verbal Warning
    - Teacher assigned consequence
    - Office referral

Hernando Middle School Restroom Procedures and Expectations

PURPOSE:

This system establishes clear expectations and procedures for student transitions to and from the restroom, ensures it is used appropriately, and is consistently monitored and followed with fidelity.

WHAT STUDENTS DO:

- Walk with purpose, (no wandering, horseplay, etc)
- Stay quiet in the hall and stay out of teachers' doors
- Voice level in the restroom should be near silent
- Always respect learning around you

IF STUDENT EXPECTATIONS ARE NOT FOLLOWED:

1. Immediate Adult Response
    - Redirection
    - Repeat expectations
2. Student Consequence Progression
    - Verbal (redirection)

- Teacher assigned consequence
- Office referral

Hernando Middle School Hallway Transition

Purpose

Create safe, efficient, instruction-focused transitions with minimal learning time lost.

What it looks Like:

All students walk in the same direction with purpose traveling to their next location. Teachers are in the hallway and at designated intersections throughout the school. The 1st, 2nd, and 6th halls are ALL one-way.

Non-negotiables:

No phones/ headphones, no waiting on friends, no touching, walking the wrong way, no hoods on in hall, no yelling, running, horseplay, and no foul language.

If expectations are not followed:

1. Immediate Adult Response
    - If electronics are present, the code of conduct will be followed
    - Redirect (document into spreadsheet with name, date, and grade)
    - Use electronic whistle
    - Repeat expectations
    - Contact an administrator if the situation warrants it

Hernando Middle School Transition To and From Lunch

Purpose

This system ensures student safety and appropriate supervision while students transition to and from the cafeteria in a calm, quiet, and orderly manner without disrupting other classes and without detouring to other parts of the school.

What it looks like:

Students and teachers walk calmly and quickly to and from their destinations.

If student expectations are not followed:

1. Immediate Adult Response

- Verbal redirect
- Repeat expectations

2. Student Consequence Progression
    - Verbal consequences for mild misbehaviors, such as talking loudly in the hallway, or talking during dismissal.
    - Office referral for refusing to leave the cafeteria at assigned time with teacher, intentional yelling, and disruptive behavior in the hallway.

Hernando Middle School Safe & Orderly Dismissal

Purpose:

This system ensures student safety and appropriate supervision while students transition to their assigned transportation for dismissal. It is designed to efficiently clear the building, improve traffic flow, and streamline bus loading and campus release procedures. Establishing a structured dismissal routine helps reduce negative behaviors, wandering, and unsupervised misconduct while promoting a calm and orderly end to the school day.

What it looks like:

Students and staff move with purpose while fully implementing the expectations established within the Safe and orderly dismissal system to ensure a safe, orderly, and efficient transition.

If student expectations are not followed:

1. Immediate Adult Response
    - Redirection of the observed misconduct
    - Repeat expectations

2. Student Consequence Progression
    - Verbal (redirection)
    - Student practice
    - Teacher assigned consequences (lunch detention, parent contact, etc.)
    - Office referral