Lake Cormorant High School

Student Handbook
2026 – 2027



10201 Starlanding Rd.
Lake Cormorant, MS 38641
662-996-3060
662-996-2520 Main Office
662-996-2521 Attendance/Guidance

PRINCIPAL
Dr. Bobby Davis

ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS
Ms. Telitha Ball
Mrs. Rebecca Murdock
Mr. Jason Russell

GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

Mrs. Yaminoh Dunbar	**9th – 12th Grades A – I**
Mrs. Tanya Kelly	**9th – 12th Grades J - P**
Mr. Parker Neal	**9th – 12th Grades Q – Z**

Welcome to Lake Cormorant High School

The policies and procedures contained in this handbook are the result of a concerted effort by the faculty and administration to assist you in becoming an integral part of Lake Cormorant High School. We believe a quality education is the ultimate tool that can take each student to great places in this world. The faculty and administration are committed to providing each student with a safe and orderly environment in which they can achieve and excel.

MISSION STATEMENT

Desoto County Schools is dedicated to ensuring world-class academic excellence within a safe learning environment, while providing a variety of exceptional extracurricular programs that foster the physical, social and emotional growth of all students.

VISION STATEMENT

DeSoto County Schools will be regionally and nationally recognized as a system of superior-performing schools that ignite a passion for learning, while inspiring student success through instructional excellence and exemplary leadership.

MISSISSIPPI COMPULSORY SCHOOL LAW

Under the Mississippi Compulsory School Attendance law, a parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory school age child in this state shall cause such child to enroll in and attend a public school or legitimate non-public school. Under the provisions of this law, "compulsory school age child" means a child who has attained or attain the age of six on or before September 1 of the calendar year and who has not attained the age of seventeen years on or before September 1 of the calendar year.

If a compulsory school age child has not been enrolled in a school within fifteen calendar days after the first day of the school year which the child is eligible to attend or if a child accumulates twelve unlawful (unexcused) absences during the school year at the public school in which the child is enrolled, the parent may be taken to court and fined and/or jailed for educational neglect of their child. The penalty for this unlawful act is up to one year in the DeSoto County Jail and/or a $1,000.00 fine.

LCHS BELL SCHEDULE
Doors Open – 8:00 AM
1st Block – 8:25 AM – 10:00 AM
Swamp TV Break (In Classroom) – 10:00 – 10:10 AM
2nd Block – 10:15 AM – 11:55 AM

3rd Block – 12:00 PM – 2:05 PM
4th Block – 2:10 PM – 3:45 PM

LCHS LUNCH SCHEDULE
1ST Lunch – 12:25 PM – 12:55 PM
2nd Lunch – 1:00 PM – 1:30 PM
3rd Lunch – 1:35 PM – 2:05 PM

CTC Dismissal
2nd Block – 9:45 AM
3rd Block – 11:45 AM

DeSoto County Schools Calendar	
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	First Semester Ends (60% day)
December 21, 2026-January 1, 2027	Christmas Holidays
January 4, 2027	Staff Development Days
January 5, 2027	Staff Development Days
January 6, 2027	Students First Day
January 18, 2027	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 15, 2027	President's 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
Tentative Make-up Days: February 15, March 29, May 26, May 27 and May 28.	

LCHS Specific Achievement Possibilities

The Club: 30 & Above- Students with an overall 30 or higher on the ACT will have their names permanently placed in the rotunda in Gator Crossing.

27 higher on the ACT – Dinner at Texas de Brazil.

Glowing Gator – Students who are written up by their teacher for good work will be invited to the Glowing Gator Pep Rally.

Advanced Scores on the State Test – Students who score on the advanced level of any of the four MAAP tests may sign their name on the wall in the respective hall of the state tested subject.

Superintendent Youth Leadership Council (SYLC) -- Students are nominated for this recognition, and selection is made by a district level committee. Those who participate will serve for two years – the junior and senior years of high school.

Future Civic Leadership – Students in 9th and 10th grades who are interested in being a good civic leader and have the opportunity to learn about local and state government. Students are nominated for this recognition, and selection is made by a district level committee.

Lake Cormorant High School

EXPECTATIONS

Being RESPECTFUL

- Treating people the way you would like to be treated

Being RESPONSIBLE

- Following DeSoto County School Code of Conduct
- NO HEADPHONES or HOODIES in the halls
- NO LOITERING in halls

Being READY to Learn

- On time
- In appropriate location
- Having required materials for class

STUDENT CHECK OUT PROCEDURE

Requests for dismissal from school will be handled in the office. **NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO CHECK OUT OF SCHOOL WITH A NOTE OR OVER THE PHONE. Parents must come to school and check the student out in the office.** Any person checking out a student can be asked to provide identification. This may be done at the time of dismissal or can be done in advance of the date if needed. Since dismissal from school constitutes an absence, it should be requested only in the case of extreme emergency.

Policy KM: Visitors to the Schools

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 12/03/2020 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 12/10/2025

SCHOOL VISITORS

Visitors with legitimate reasons for coming to the school are welcome in any of the DeSoto County District Schools.

The following regulations shall be observed during the visitation:

1. All visitors must immediately report to the principal's office (including news media).
2. If the principal has any reason to question the legitimacy of the visit, the superintendent's office shall be consulted.
3. Teachers shall not be interrupted while teaching except for emergencies.
4. Pupils from other schools and pre-school children are not allowed unless specifically invited and pre-arranged through the principal's office.
5. News media must be granted permission by the Superintendent or his/her designee before they enter a school campus or they will be considered trespassing and are subject to fines and/or arrest.

Last Review Date:_____

Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Deliveries to School

ONLY SCHOOL RELATED DELIVERIES ALLOWED!

Fast Food Deliveries for Students

NO FAST-FOOD DELIVERIES ALLOWED!

Policy JAA: Equal Educational Opportunities

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 01/23/2026

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.

REF.: MS Code § 37-15-35 (1970)
Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Policy EBAB: Smoke Free Buildings

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 11/20/2025 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 11/20/2025

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.

REF: Public Law 103-227, 20 US CODE 6083 Section 1043 (a) and (c-1) and (f-1)

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Policy BAAB: Non-Discrimination Policy

Status:
ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 12/06/2018 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 12/10/2025

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.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Policy JBA: Compulsory School Attendance/School Age

Status:
ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 05/21/2026 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 05/21/2026

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.

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 05/21/2026 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 05/21/2026

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.

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.

- Content for grades 9-12 is determined by Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards for Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and the Mississippi Content Frameworks for all remaining subjects.
- Progress Reports will be sent in 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.

9 WEEKS GRADING PERIOD

Lake Cormorant High School will operate on a nine (9) weeks grading cycle. Report cards will be issued to the student at the end of each 9 weeks grading period.

PROGRESS REPORTS

All students will receive a progress report each 9 weeks.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students may possess and use electronic devices at school subject to the following:

- The student is using the device for an educational or instructional purpose with the teacher's permission and supervision.
- Electronic devices may be used for specific instructional activities at the discretion of the school building administrator.

If a student brings an electronic device to school and it is lost or stolen, the school will not be responsible and will not conduct a search for the device.

LUNCH

Students may pay in advance for lunch daily, weekly, or monthly to the cafeteria. Parents may pay online at https://linqconnect.com. Parents may check their child's account by either method. Approved free and reduced lunch will be handled in the same manner. Cash will be accepted in the lunch line. However, no change will be given to students. It will be added to the student's lunch account.

Policy IHA: Grading System

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 | **Last Revised Date:** 05/15/2025 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 04/27/2026

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

GRADING POLICY

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.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

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DROPPING SUBJECTS AND CHANGING SCHEDULES

Dropping subjects and changing schedules will be done only through the guidance office or upon request of the principal. A change of schedule may be considered only in extreme cases.

Students transferring to LCHS from an out-of-district school may not enroll in full credit or state-tested subjects if more than 25% of the days have been missed for the current term/semester.

Students may be removed from State Tested Subjects (Algebra I, Biology I, English II, U.S. History) at the discretion of the Principal. Criteria for removal may include grades, attendance, behavior, or other special circumstances.

Policy IEDB: Classification of Students

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 05/15/2025 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 03/31/2026

CLASSIFICATION OF STUDENTS

The curriculum of each high school, at a minimum, consists of required and approved courses that generate at least 33 1/2 Carnegie units annually.

The classification of students is based on the following requirements.

For students entering the ninth grade in 2014-2015:

Freshman	Grade 9	Has earned fewer than 6 Carnegie Units
Sophomore	Grade 10	Has earned at least 6 Carnegie Units and has successfully completed English I and 2 additional Core Carnegie Units
Junior	Grade 11	Has earned at least 13 Carnegie Units and has successfully completed English II, Algebra I, and 3 additional Core Carnegie Units
Senior	Grade 12	Has earned at least 18 Carnegie Units and has successfully completed 3 English Carnegie units and on track to graduate

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Policy IHE: Promotion and Retention

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 07/22/2021 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 04/27/2026

PROMOTION/RETENTION

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.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Policy IDDFAA: District Assurance For Children With Disabilities

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 06/22/2026 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 06/22/2026

DISTRICT ASSURANCE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Desoto County Schools will adhere to State Board Policy 74.19 (State Policies Regarding Children with Disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 2004) effective September 15, 2013. Desoto County Schools will also adhere to subsequent procedures.

FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION

The DeSoto County School District will provide a free appropriate public education to children ages three (3) through twenty (20), with a disability who, by reason thereof, need special education and, as appropriate, related services as defined under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), Mississippi statutes, and the Mississippi Department of Education policies. A free appropriate public education will be provided to students with disabilities residing within the jurisdiction of the district and who are enrolled in the DeSoto County School District. These services will be provided at no cost to the parent, meet the standards of the Mississippi State Board of Education as set forth in state policies and procedures, and in conformity with a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Provision of a free appropriate public education will continue for a student with a disability through the school year in which a student reaches age twenty-one (21) if the student was enrolled in the district and was twenty (20) at the beginning of the school year.

Preschool students who have been determined to have a disability under IDEA, Part B, shall be provided a free appropriate public education in accordance with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) no later than their third birthday.

Children participating in early-intervention programs under Part C of IDEA, and who are eligible and will participate in preschool programs under Part B of IDEA, will experience a smooth and effective transition to the district's preschool program. Appropriate district personnel will participate in transition planning conferences arranged by the Department of Health, the lead agency for Part C of IDEA.

In accordance with Part B of IDEA regulations, students with disabilities who have graduated from high school with a general education diploma are not entitled to a free appropriate public education by the district.

Procedures for the implementation of this policy by the district are those contained in the state regulations that are relevant to local school districts and issued by the Mississippi Department of Education.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR SERVICES

The DeSoto County School District will ensure that Extended School Year (ESY) services are available as necessary to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education. ESY services are special education and related services that are provided to a child with a disability which meet the standards of the Mississippi Department of Education's criteria in state regulations. Services, as appropriate, will be provided beyond the normal school year of the district, in accordance with the student's IEP, and at no cost to the parents.

FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION

The DeSoto County School District is committed to serving students with disabilities by providing full educational opportunities for all students with disabilities, ages three (3) through twenty (20), in accordance with the Mississippi Department of Education's policies and procedures. These opportunities will be provided in accordance with applicable state statutes, federal laws, and the Mississippi Department of Education's policies.

CHILD FIND

The DeSoto County School District will continue its efforts to search for unserved children, age three through twenty-one, who are in need of special education and related services as defined under IDEA, Part B. Children with disabilities, including children who are homeless children or are wards of the State, regardless of the severity of their disability are identified, located, and evaluated for services. In accordance with IDEA, Part B, the district will conduct Child Find activities for children who reside in the district's jurisdiction and who are enrolled in the district.

Similar Child Find activities undertaken for public school children enrolled in the district will be conducted with respect to the identification, location, and evaluation for those children with disabilities who are enrolled in private schools, including religious elementary and secondary schools located within the boundaries of the district. The Child Find process will be completed in a time period comparable to that for other students enrolled and attending public schools within the district.

The DeSoto County School District will adhere to the relevant policies and procedures for implementation of the Child

Find requirements for local school districts under IDEA, Part B, as issued by the Mississippi Department of Education.

STUDENTS PLACED IN THE DESOTO COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

For students placed in the DeSoto County Juvenile Detention Center, the district will participate in Child Find by accepting referrals of children from the juvenile justice system, from school officials in the student's home district, and from parents of students who may have a disability and who may be in need of special education and related services as required under Part B of IDEA. Children suspected of having a disability and who may be in need of special education and related services will be evaluated to determine eligibility for services under Part B of IDEA.

When conducting Child Find activities for students placed in the DeSoto County Juvenile Detention Center, the district will undertake activities that are similar to the activities undertaken for students enrolled in the district (i.e., evaluation standards and eligibility criteria). The process will be expedited but shall not exceed the time period for students enrolled in the district.

Students who were previously enrolled in another district other than the DeSoto County School District but are placed in the DeSoto County Juvenile Detention Center, will also be included in the district's process of Child Find. Records will be obtained from the home school by email and/or records request.

After forty-eight (48) hours of detention, the students shall receive the following services:

a. Diagnostic assessment of grade-level mastery of reading and math skills:
b. Individualized instruction and practice to address any weaknesses identified in the assessment;
c. Character education to improve behavior;
d. Referral for consideration for evaluation, if needed;
e. Counseling services provided by Region IV Mental Health and the assigned DCS Mental Health Therapist if so deemed necessary;
f. Related services designated on the IEP are provided by district personnel.

These services may be computer-based.

A team, consisting of a certified teacher provided by the local school district or a private provider agreed upon by the district, the appropriate official from the home school district or the home school within the district and the parent or guardian, is invited to attend a Child Find meeting within fourteen (14) days of the request being made.

EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – PROTECTION IN EVALUATION

All testing and evaluation materials and procedures used by the DeSoto County School District personnel for assessment and placement will be, to the maximum extent possible, selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory. The district will ensure that no child will be misclassified, misplaced, or unnecessarily identified as having a disability because of the inappropriate selection, administration or interpretation of materials or procedures. Such materials or procedures shall be provided and administered in the child's native language or mode of communication, unless it clearly is not feasible to do so, and no single procedure shall be the sole criterion for determining an appropriate educational program for a child.

The DeSoto County School District will conduct a full and individual evaluation in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Mississippi Department of Education prior to the initial provision of special education and related services to a student with a disability. Following a referral for an initial evaluation and all data is reviewed, the district will ensure a comprehensive assessment is conducted in accordance with the regulations of the Mississippi Department of Education. A reevaluation will be conducted of each student with a disability in accordance with the regulations of the Mississippi Department of Education.

All initial evaluations and reevaluations conducted by the district will be provided at no cost to the parent. The district's procedures for implementation of this policy are those contained in the state regulations issued by the Mississippi Department of Education.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

The DeSoto County School District will protect the confidentiality of any personally identifiable data, information, and records collected and maintained relative to students with disabilities as required under IDEA, Part B, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The procedures for implementation of this policy are those contained in the state regulations issued by the Mississippi Department of Education.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM

In accordance with the policies and procedures of the Mississippi Department of Education, the DeSoto County School District will ensure the development, implementation, review, maintenance, and revision of each student's IEP periodically but not less than annually. Educational placement decisions will be determined by a student's IEP committee, except when a school official has the authority under IDEA, Part B, to remove a student with a disability from the student's current placement due to a violation of school rules. The district will initiate and conduct IEP meetings to develop, review, and revise the IEP of a student residing within its jurisdiction who is provided special education and related services in accordance with the regulations issued by the Mississippi Department of Education. The district's procedures for implementation of this policy are those contained in the state regulations issued by the Mississippi Department of Education.

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

The DeSoto County School District assures the provision of the rights and the procedures provided to parents and students with disabilities as required under IDEA, Part B, and the regulatory policies and procedures issued by the Mississippi Department of Education. Due process rights are provided to students with disabilities and their parents. The district's procedures for implementation of this policy are those contained in the state regulations issued by the Mississippi Department of Education.

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The DeSoto County School District, to the maximum extent appropriate, educates students with disabilities with students having no disabilities in their age range. The removal of students with disabilities from the general educational environment will occur only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. A continuum of alternative placements based on individual students' IEPs will be provided to students with disabilities in the district. Placement of the students will be determined at least on an annual basis and will be as close to the student's home as possible. In selecting the least restrictive environment for each student, consideration is given to any potentially harmful effect on the student or the quality of services needed.

The district's procedures for implementation of this policy are those contained in the state regulations issued by the Mississippi Department of Education. The IEP committee, when determining placement of each student with a disability, will utilize this policy and the designated procedures.

PLACEMENT IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS BY AGENCY

The DeSoto County School District ensures that each student with a disability under IDEA, part B, placed in or referred to a private school by the district will be provided special education and related services as stipulated by the IEP. The district will be responsible for the educational cost of such placement and will ensure that, in the district's judgment an

appropriate education is available. Students with disabilities placed in a private school or facility by the district will have all the rights under IDEA of a student with a disability that is served within the district.

PLACEMENT IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS BY PARENT
In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, the DeSoto County School District will not be required to pay for the cost of education, including special education and related services, of a student with a disability at the private school or facility by their parents if the district made a free appropriate public education available to the student.

PLACEMENT IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS BY PARENT – PARTICIPATION PROVISION UNDER IDEA
To the extent consistent with the number and location of children with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private schools, including religious elementary and secondary schools located within the jurisdiction of the DeSoto County School District, provision will be made for their participation in activities assisted or carried out under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) by providing them an opportunity to receive special education and/or related services in accordance with the policies and procedures under IDEA, Part B, and those issued by the Mississippi Department of Education.

PERFORMANCE GOALS
The DeSoto County School District will utilize the established performance goals and indicators established by the Mississippi Department of Education to assess the district's progress toward achieving those established goals.

PARTICIPATION IN STATE AND DISTRICT-WIDE ASSESSMENTS
The DeSoto County School District will ensure children with disabilities are included in all general education state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations in the administration of such tests in accordance with the policies and procedures established by the Mississippi Department of Education and the local school district. Children with disabilities who cannot participate in general education state and district-wide assessment programs with accommodations will be provided an alternative assessment in accordance with policies and procedures established by the Mississippi Department of Education and the local school district and as indicated in their respective individualized education programs.

TRANSITION SERVICES
"Transition services" means a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that:
a. Is designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-secondary activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;
b. Is based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preference and interests;
c. Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

IDEA SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES POLICY

Pursuant to federal law, school districts receiving Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) federal funds to provide services to students with disabilities must do so in accordance with IDEA. It is the Board of Education's intent that IDEA funds shall be used efficiently and effectively to benefit the academic opportunities and progress

of students with disabilities.

IDEA funds shall be used to provide educational services that are in addition to the regular services provided during the school day for district students. Supplemental services include, but not limited to: direct services, supports to the student, and/or training for staff who work with the student. By adoption of this policy, the Board ensures that IDEA funds are used to supplement educational services for students with disabilities. The Superintendent of Schools shall follow the Federal and State guidelines in determining supplementing services for students with disabilities and upon request, report to the Board on the status of district schools with regard to supplementation.

Policy ID
CAB: Credit Recovery Program

Status:
ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 09/21/2009 **| Last Revised Date:** 06/05/2025 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 03/31/2026

Credit Recovery Policy

Credit recovery is defined as a course-specific, skills-based learning opportunity for students who have previously been unsuccessful in mastering content/skills required to receive course credit or earn promotion. The goal of the credit recovery program is to prevent students from dropping out of high school.

DeSoto County Schools will implement a web-based curriculum program to provide extensive support for students in credit recovery, credit completion, remediation and intervention. The program will be aligned with the Mississippi standards. The program will provide diagnostic testing which prescribes an individualized study plan for each student as well as progress monitoring to ensure students achieve success as they move throughout the lessons.

Admission To or Removal From Credit Recovery

The purpose of credit recovery is to provide a second chance to obtain credit for courses, allowing students to remain on track for graduation. In order for students to be candidates for the program, the following criteria must be met:

1. Parental consent is required before a student can enroll in credit recovery.
2. A student may not participate in credit recovery if a grade below 50 was received for a course.
3. Any student who has passed a state subject area test, but did not receive credit in the course may participate in credit recovery.
4. Students shall not remain in a Credit Recovery Course for more than one year.
5. Only students who have failed a course may enroll in credit recovery to earn a passing grade of 65. The student must recover the credit within one (1) school calendar year. Credit recovery cannot be used by a student that has passed the course to improve the students assigned course grade.

6. A student that has passed a subject area tested class but failed the assessment may enroll in credit recovery for remediation only.

Course Load

Students may enroll in no more than two courses simultaneously. Course work must be completed within one year for a full credit class and one semester for a half credit class. Upon completion of a course, a new course may be started subject to the participation criteria stated above.

Instruction

A web-based curriculum program featuring a multimedia-rich curriculum for grades K-12 will be used for instruction. The curriculum-software solution~~s~~ is self-paced and customizable. Web tools for administrators and teachers give educators and programs the features they need to individualize instruction and manage student data. Web-based materials can be used as a core or supplemental educational program for a variety of target populations and situations. Web-based curriculum is designed to effectively improve instruction for all types of students at a variety of learning levels.

Grading

The credit recovery program was established to allow students to demonstrate mastery. In order for a student to receive credit for a unit, he/she must earn 65% mastery of the material in that unit. This sets the minimum grade for each course taken at 65.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Policy IHF: Graduation Requirements

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 | **Last Revised Date:** 06/06/2024

Beginning in 2018-2019 all incoming freshmen must meet one of the following graduation options: 1) Traditional 24 Credit Diploma, 2) Traditional 26 Credit Diploma with a Career Technical Endorsement or a JROTC Endorsement, 3) Traditional 26 Credit Diploma with an Academic Endorsement, or 4) Traditional 28 Credit Diploma with a Distinguished Academic Endorsement. Incoming freshmen (2018-2019 and beyond) with Significant Cognitive Disabilities are eligible to earn an Alternate Diploma.

All students are required to meet the Mississippi Department of Education state assessment requirements.

Contents of each required and elective course must include the core objectives identified in the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards. Course titles and identification numbers must appear in the current edition of the Approved Courses for Secondary Schools in Mississippi. Students enrolled in grades 7 -12 may be awarded a Carnegie unit credit provided the course content is a Carnegie unit bearing course in the current edition of the Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi Manual and meets the specifications outlined in the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards. Enrollment in online courses listed in this manual must have prior approval granted by the principal.

"A student who fails to meet the graduation requirements is not permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony."

Traditional Diploma
24 Credit

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

See Appendix A-6 of the Mississippi Public Accountability Standards for additional details regarding allowable courses for each curriculum area.

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	English I, English II
Mathematics	4	Algebra I
Science	3	Biology I

Social Studies	3 ½	World History, U.S. History, U.S. Government, Economics, Mississippi Studies
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
The Arts	1	
College and Career Readiness	1	*Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
Additional Electives	5 ½	
Total Units Required	24	

Requirements:

- Student should identify an endorsement area prior to entering 9th grade. Endorsement requirements can only be changed with parental permission.
- For early release, students must have met the College or Career Readiness Benchmarks (ACT sub scores: 17 English and 19 Math or earned a Silver level on ACT WorkKeys suite of assessments. For seniors that have not met the benchmarks, to qualify for early release (work release) students must meet the following requirements:
    - Have a 2.5 GPA and have passed or meet the assessment option requirements for all four end-of-course assessments AND
    - Are on track to meet diploma requirements
      AND
    - Are concurrently enrolled in the appropriate Essentials for College Math or another mathematics course above their Junior year mathematics course and/or Essentials for College Literacy or another English Language Arts course above their Junior level English Language Arts course.
      OR

- Have a GPA of 2.5 and have passed or meet the assessment option requirements for all four end-of-course assessments AND
- Are on track to meet the diploma requirements AND
- Students meet postsecondary requirements for placement and are enrolled in ENG Comp I and/or MAT College Algebra or have previously earned credit for ENG Comp I and/or MAT College Algebra

- **"A student who fails to meet the graduation requirements is not permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony."**

Traditional Diploma with a Career and Technical Endorsement or JRTOC Endorsement

26 Credits

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

See Appendix A-7 of the Mississippi Public Accountability Standards for additional details regarding allowable courses for each curriculum area.

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	English I, English II
Mathematics	4	Algebra I
Science	3	Biology I
Social Studies	3 ½	World History, U.S. History, U.S. Government, Economics, Mississippi Studies
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Arts	1	

College and Career Readiness	1	Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
CTE or JRTOC Electives	4	
Additional Electives	3 ½	
Total Units	26	

Additional Requirements:

- Earn an overall GPA of 2.5.
- Earn a Silver level on ACT WorkKeys.
- Earn two additional Carnegie Units for a total of 26.
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
    - One dual credit course
    - Work-based Learning
    - Earn a State Board of Education-approved national credential
    - One (1) AP, Diploma Program-IB, or Cambridge (AICE) course aligned to their career pathway. Students must earn a C or higher and take the appropriate exam
    - NOCTI/JRTOC Leadership and Employability Skills Credential
- **"A student who fails to meet the graduation requirements is not permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony."**

Traditional Diploma with an Academic Endorsement

26 Credits

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

See Appendix A-8 of the Mississippi Public Accountability Standards for additional details regarding allowable courses for each curriculum area.

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	English I, English II, two additional courses above English II
Mathematics	4	Algebra I plus two additional math courses above Algebra I
Science	3	Biology I plus two additional science courses above Biology I
Social Studies	3 ½	World History, U.S. History, U.S. Government, Economics, Mississippi Studies
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
The Arts	1	
College and Career Readiness	1	*Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
Additional Electives	7 ½	Must meet 2 advanced electives of the CPC requirements for MS IHLs
Total Units Required	26	

Additional Requirements:

- Earn an overall GPA of 2.5.
- Two (2) elective courses must meet MS IHL CPC requirements.
- Must successfully complete one (1) of the following

1. ACT sub scores of 17 in English and 19 in Math
2. Essentials of College Math or Essentials of College Literacy (in senior year)
3. SAT equivalency subscore

- Earn two additional Carnegie Units for a total of 26
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
    - One AP course with a C or higher and take the appropriate AP exam
    - One Diploma Program IB course with a C or higher and take the appropriate IB exams
    - One dual credit course with a C or higher in the course
- **"A student who fails to meet the graduation requirements is not permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony."**

Traditional Diploma with a Distinguished Academic Endorsement
28 Credits

(Entering ninth graders in 2018-2019 and thereafter)

See Appendix A-9 of the Mississippi Public Accountability Standards for additional details regarding allowable courses for each curriculum area.

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	English I, English II, two additional courses above English II
Mathematics	4	Algebra I plus two additional math courses above Algebra I
Science	4	Biology I plus two additional science courses above Biology I
Social Studies	4	World History, U.S. History, U.S. Government, Economics, Mississippi Studies

Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
The Arts	1	
College and Career Readiness	1	*Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
Additional Electives	8	Must meet 2 advanced electives of the CPC requirements for MS IHLs
Total Units Required	28	

Additional Requirements:

- Earn an overall GPA of 3.0.
- Two (2) elective courses must meet MS IHL CPC recommended requirements.
- Earn national college readiness benchmarks on each subtest established by ACT of 18 in English and 22 in Math or the SAT equivalency sub score.
- Earn four additional Carnegie Units for a total of 28.
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
    - One AP course with a B or higher and take the appropriate AP exam
    - One Diploma Program IB course with a B or higher and take the appropriate IB exams
    - One academic dual credit course with a B or higher in the course
- **"A student who fails to meet the graduation requirements is not permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony."**

Alternate Diploma Option

(Entering ninth graders of 2018-2019 and thereafter for students with significant cognitive disabilities)

See Appendix A-10 of the Mississippi Public Accountability Standards for additional details regarding allowable courses for each curriculum area.

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	Alternate English I-IV
Mathematics	4	Alternate Math I-III Alternate Algebra
Science	2	Alternate Biology Alternate Science II
Social Studies	2	Alternate History Alternate Social Studies
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	Alternate Health
Arts	1	
Career Readiness	4	Career Readiness I-IV (Strands: Technology Systems, Employability, and Social)
Life Skills Development	4	Life Skills Development I-IV
Additional Electives	2	
Total Units Required	24	

Requirements:

- The Alternate Diploma is not equivalent to a traditional high school diploma and is not recognized by postsecondary entities that require a traditional high school diploma.
- All students are required to participate in the Mississippi Assessment Program-Alternate Assessment (MAAP-A) and achieve a level of Passing or Proficient.
- Students who have met the criteria on their IEP for having a Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD) may participate in a program of study to earn the Alternate Diploma.
- **"A student who fails to meet the graduation requirements is not permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony."**

Last Review Date:_____

Policy IHFADA: Assessments Required for Graduation

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 05/18/2015 **| Last Revised Date:** 08/21/2025 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 04/27/2026

1. Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, all students enrolled in one (1) of the three (3) end-of-course Subject Area Test courses must pass the course and participate in the applicable end-of-course Subject Area Test,
2. Beginning with school year 2025-2026, students shall graduate by passing the course and meeting one (1) of the following options:

♣ Passing the applicable end-of-course Subject Area Test, or

♣ Using options outlined in Chapter 36, Rule 36.5, or

♣ Using the end-of-course Subject Area Test score with the overall course grade based on the Concordance Table for each of the three (3) end-of-course Subject Area Tests as provided to school districts by the Mississippi Department of Education. (Students must be enrolled to utilize this option.)

3. Any Mississippi public school student who fails to pass a required end-of-course Subject Area Test, prior to the school year 2016-2017, will be offered opportunities to retake the test. Effective 2025-2026

School Year, the U.S. History exam will no longer be administered. Students who were enrolled as a graduating Senior in the 2024-2025 school year and continued to be enrolled in the 2025-2026 school year and/or thereafter will not be required to retake the assessment. Students who are not enrolled at the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year who failed this assessment but still need the assessment to graduate will be required to meet one of the other options in lieu of the assessment.

Archived Information Regarding Chapter 36, Rule 36.4

Academic end-of-course Subject Area Tests were phased in during the 2001-2002 school year to replace the Functional Literacy Examination (FLE) as a requirement for graduation.

1. Students who began 9th grade PRIOR to 1999-2000 must pass the Functional Literacy Examination (FLE).
2. Students who began 9th grade in school year 1999-2000 must pass the Functional Literacy Examination (FLE) plus the Subject Area Test in U.S. History.

3. Students who began 9th grade in school year 2000-2001 must pass the mathematics section of the FLE plus the Subject Area Tests in U.S. History and English II.

4. Students who began 9th grade in 2001-2002 must pass the mathematics section of the FLE plus the Subject Area Tests in U.S. History, English II, and Biology.

5. Students who began 9th grade in 2002-2003 must pass the end-of-course Subject Area Tests in U. S. History, English II, Biology, and Algebra I. Students who began 9th grade in 2003-2004 and each year thereafter must pass all required end-of-course Subject Area Tests in U.S. History, English II, Biology, and Algebra I.

6. Beginning with school year 2014-2015, students shall graduate by passing the course and meeting one (1) of the following options:

   a. Passing the applicable end-of-course Subject Area Test, or
   b. Using options outlined in Chapter 36, Rule 36.5, or
   c. Using the end-of-course Subject Area Test score with the overall course grade based on the Concordance Table for each of the four (4) end-of-course Subject Area Tests as provided to school districts by the Mississippi Department of Education. (Students must be enrolled in order to utilize this option.)

7. Beginning with school year 2015-2016, enrolled students had the option of achieving a combined minimum score from the end-of-course Subject Area Tests to meet the requirement for graduation in lieu of passing the applicable end-of-course Subject Area Test. This option required combining four (4) end-of-course assessment scores. This option will no longer be available to student beginning with the 2025-2026 school year unless the student had already taken the U.S. History end-of-course assessment and received a valid score.

8. Prior to the 2025-2026 school year, all students enrolled in one (1) of the four (4) end-of course Subject Area Test courses must pass the course and participate in the applicable end-of-course Subject Area Test in order to earn the Carnegie Unit.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Policy IHCB: Graduates of Distinction and Special Distinction

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 06/16/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 01/23/2025 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 04/27/2026

GRADUATES OF DISTINCTION AND SPECIAL DISTINCTION

A “Graduate of Distinction” must have an overall weighted numerical average of 90-94 for the freshman, sophomore, and junior years and the first three (3) terms of the senior year. The student must meet the Traditional Diploma twenty-four (24) credit graduation requirements. Beginning with 2021-2022 entering freshmen, students must also successfully complete an endorsement option (Career & Technical, JROTC, Academic, Distinguished Academic) to be considered a "Graduate of Distinction".

Graduates of Special Distinction:

A “Graduate of Special Distinction” must have an overall weighted numerical average of 95 or higher for the freshman, sophomore, and junior years and the first three (3) terms of the senior year. The student must meet the Traditional Diploma twenty-four (24) credit graduation requirements. Beginning with 2021-2022 entering

freshmen, students must also successfully complete an endorsement option (Career & Technical, JROTC, Academic, Distinguished Academic) to be considered a "Graduate of Special Distinction".

Because the overall weighted numerical average must include three grading terms of the Senior year, students who chose to graduate a semester or more early will not be eligible to be considered a Graduate of Distinction or Special Distinction.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN

(Entering ninth graders in 2009 and after)

- The Valedictorian and/or Salutatorian of each DeSoto County High School must be enrolled in the school on or before September 1 of the student's junior year and attend the school for both the junior and senior school years.
- The Valedictorian and Salutatorian must meet the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning entry requirements.
- The valedictorian must have the highest overall weighted numerical average based on fifteen (15) quarters.
- The salutatorian must have the second highest overall weighted numerical average based on fifteen (15) quarters.

Policy IHFA: Special Education Graduation

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 05/01/2025 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 04/27/2026

GRADING/OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES TO EXIT HIGH SCHOOL

PART I – ACCESS

DeSoto County Schools is committed to the integrity of all programs offered by the District. All students are given a reasonable opportunity to take part in all instructional programs. Participation is determined by the student's Individualized Education Plan.

Students who have a disability that adversely affects educational performance will be included in the general education curriculum and/or the general education environment to the maximum extent possible. As a result, the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will delineate all aspects of the student's educational program. These aspects are determined by the student's IEP team, which includes teacher(s) and the student's parent or guardian.

To protect the established standards of the instructional program, the following is necessary to consider on a case-by-case basis. For the purposes of this policy, accommodation and modification are defined as follows:

1. Accommodation: does not fundamentally and substantially lower the standards or objectives being taught in the general education class. Rather, accommodations allow students with learning differences equal

access to the general education curriculum and provide different ways for these students to demonstrate mastery. Accommodations or differentiation allows for students to gain or demonstrate mastery according to his or her individual needs, as determined by the IEP team.

2. Modification: does fundamentally or substantially lower the standards or objectives for mastery to allow equal access to the general education environment. A modification allows for an objective to be altered so the individual instructional needs of the student can be met, as determined by the IEP team.

PART II - GRADING

Students enrolled for the purpose of earning credit are accountable for meeting the requirements for mastery. The student's IEP Committee will determine if the student is participating for the purposes of a Carnegie Unit or whether a student is participating for a different reason.

Any student who is enrolled in a subject with the expectation of receiving a Carnegie Unit as credit for the subject, is allowed to have reasonable accommodations to access the general education curriculum and/or to demonstrate mastery. Accommodations, adaptations, and other forms of differentiated instruction are encouraged.

The grades, credit, and/or participation of students with disabilities will be reflected in one of the following ways on the student's report card:

1. If the student is not in a grade where a Carnegie Unit is applicable and the student is working towards credit for grade promotion, then the numerical grade will be recorded.
2. If the student is in a course where a Carnegie Unit is being awarded and mastery of the standards and objectives is achieved without a modified/altered curriculum and the student is receiving appropriate instructional and testing accommodations as determined by the student's IEP, then the student will receive a numerical grade and will be awarded a Carnegie Unit.
3. If the student is in a general education course where a Carnegie Unit is being awarded but the standards and objectives are being modified according to the student's IEP, then the student will be awarded a numerical grade, based upon successful completion of the modified curriculum, and will not be awarded a Carnegie unit.

Three options for a student with disabilities to exit high school are:

1. General diploma: Based on the DCS graduation options for a traditional diploma.
2. Alternate Diploma: Successful completion of the Alternate Diploma curriculum as set forth by MDE. This option is only available to students whose IEP identifies them as having a Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD).
3. Certificate of Completion: Available to students with or without a Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD) that meet MDE certification of eligibility.

Options for exiting high school will be discussed at an IEP meeting, with the student's parent or guardian in attendance. A decision regarding the student's exit plan must be made no later than the student's 14th birthday, but may be made earlier.

The IEP team may change a previous decision regarding options for exiting high school. Any student, however,

graduating with a general education diploma or a Mississippi Alternate diploma must earn the required Carnegie Units.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Policy IHDB: Fifth Year Seniors

Status:
ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 06/16/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 06/01/2023 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 04/27/2026

FIFTH YEAR SENIORS

If a student returns to a DeSoto County High School as a fifth year senior, the student will only enroll in the needed courses. The student will not be required to attend two courses all four terms.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Policy IFG: Early Graduation

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 04/08/2019 **| Last Revised Date:** 07/03/2025 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 03/31/2026

Early graduation involves the completion of all high school academic requirements in less than a traditional four-year program. Any high school student who will complete the number of Carnegie units and other existing standards required by both the state and the district prior to completing eight (8) semesters of high school work may petition to graduate early.

In order to petition early for graduation, students must present their post-secondary plan as part of the application. The desire to better tailor the educational system to students' needs is the motivation behind allowing early graduation from high school. There are students who are prepared to enter the workforce or begin college when they are 17 years old; however, this may not apply to all students. Preparedness for post-secondary endeavors shall be taken into account when discussing the option of early graduation with students. The drawbacks to accelerating high school may not reveal themselves until a student enters college or the workforce.

A Senior may petition the high school principal to graduate one semester early, and the principal, after approval from a counselor, may grant the request without board approval. If a student requests to graduate more than one semester early, the principal, after approval from a counselor, must make the request in writing to the school board before December 1st of the current school year (during the student's junior year). The DeSoto County School Board can elect to approve a request after this deadline due to special circumstances. A student's plan may be terminated at any time due to academic, behavioral, or attendance issues.

<u>The student must meet one of the following criteria in order to request early graduation (one semester or more):</u>

1. The student must earn a traditional diploma with an academic, career, JROTC, or distinguished endorsement.
2. A non-Senior who will turn 18 before December 1st of the current school year. (Include PowerSchool demographics page and transcript with letter to the board.)
3. A student who has been retained in one or more grades (Include a copy of permanent record with letter to board.)
4. A student with a hardship situation (child, family, etc.) (Include hardship and other pertinent information surrounding hardship in the body of letter to the board.)

<u>Requirements to submit for either early graduation option:</u>

1. The student's post-secondary plan is presented with the application/form, and a copy is in the cumulative record.
2. Parents and students should receive and sign the Early Graduation Acknowledgment Form to be filed with application/form.

<u>One of the following is required for early graduation beyond one semester:</u>

1. Met ACT College and Career Readiness Standards for English/Reading and Math
2. Scored Silver or Higher on ACT WorkKeys
3. Earned a CTE national certification
4. Earned at least nine (9) hours of academic dual credit, including Comp I and College Algebra
5. Passed all End of Course Assessments needed to meet graduation requirements
6. Completed a one Carnegie unit credit-bearing work-based learning class or a similar 140-hour work-based learning experience in industry that could provide sustainable employment leading to a family-sustaining wage

Original Adopted Date: 06/16/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 06/01/2023 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 02/19/2026

SENIOR PRIVILEGES

Seniors are allowed two (2) college visit days per semester. The visits must be pre-approved by the principal or his or her designee, and documentation of the visits must be provided. A college visit will be documented as a school activity for attendance purposes.

Seniors may also enjoy the privilege of early release or late arrival if they meet the requirements as outlined in Board Policy JGFCB- Early Release- Late Arrivals. All seniors must be enrolled in two (2) courses all four terms.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Policy JGFCB: Early Release - Late Arrivals

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 06/16/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 06/22/2026 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 06/22/2026

EARLY RELEASE/LATE ARRIVAL

Seniors must be enrolled in two courses all four terms. Seniors are eligible for early release and/or late arrival if they meet the following requirements:

- Must have met College or Career Readiness Benchmarks ACT sub scores of 17 in English and 19 in Math or earned a Silver level on ACT WorkKeys suite of assessments. For seniors that have not met the benchmarks, to qualify for early release (work release) students must meet the following requirements:
- Have a GPA of 2.5 and have passed or meet the assessment option requirements for all three end-of-course assessments AND
- Are on track to meet the diploma requirements AND
- Are concurrently enrolled in the appropriate Essentials for College Math or another mathematics course above their Junior year mathematics course and/or Essentials for College Literacy or another English Language Arts course above their Junior level English Language Arts course OR
- Have a GPA of 2.5 and have passed or meet the assessment option requirements for all three end-of-course assessments AND
- Are on track to meet the diploma requirements AND
- Students meet postsecondary requirements for placement and are enrolled in ENG Comp I and/or MAT College Algebra or have previously earned credit for ENG Comp I and/or MAT College Algebra

If a student is released early and desires to return for extracurricular activities, he/she is allowed to do so.

Any student desiring early release or late arrival must have a signed parental permission form on file.

DESOTO COUNTY SCHOOLS

Application for Early Release/Late Arrival

Name_____DOB_____Grade_____

Please check the class period for which you are applying for early release/late arrival.

____1st Block ____2nd Block ____3rd Block ____4th Block

Signed Student Statement:

Upon approval, I agree to leave the school campus at the above designated period. I understand that I may only return to campus to participate in a scheduled extracurricular activity.

_____ _____

Signature of Student Date

Signed Parent Statement:

I request early release/late arrival for my child and give permission for him/her to leave school.

_____ _____

Signature of Parent Date

*The principal has the authority to revoke this privilege at any time.

_____Denied Early Release/Late Arrival

_____Approved Early Release/Late Arrival

Reason for Denial: _____

OR

Early Release/Late Arrival is approved for the following dates:

_____to_____

Signature of Principal/Asst. Principal: _____

Policy INBA: Career Technology Center Placement Process

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 05/01/2025 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 04/27/2026

DESOTO COUNTY CAREER TECHNOLOGY CENTER PLACEMENT PROCESS

The basic curriculum of the DeSoto County Career Technology Center shall be considered a part of the total curricular offering of each attendance area's instructional program. A Career and Technical Education counselor is

provided under the provision of the state plan for the administration of the Center.

PLACEMENT OF REGULAR STUDENTS IN THE CAREER TECHNOLOGY CENTER

The district-wide Career Technology Center shall recruit students for each program in the year prior to their enrollment. The recruitment target for the two-year program shall be the 9th and 10th grade class in all attendance areas. The person responsible for the district-wide recruitment for the center shall be the counselor or other designee, who shall be in accord with the methods listed in the approved plan. In any Career and Technical Education placement, practices and procedures shall be conducted in a manner that ensures compliance with the statutes. Selection of regular students shall be based on the recommendation of the Career and Technical Education committee in partnership with the school. A tentative list of enrollees shall be submitted to each school**.**

PLACEMENT OF DISABLED STUDENTS RECEIVING SERVICES UNDER AND INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN

The placement of any student with disabilities receiving services under an IEP in vocational education is processed in the following manner:

1. Equal access begins with information to 9th grade students with disabilities and their parents concerning the opportunities available in Career and Technical education and the requirements for eligibility for enrollment in Career and Technical education.
2. The Student Services Coordinator from the center will be in contact with the school Special Education department to ensure a successful completion of the Career and Technical education program that will be entered.
3. Special services, including IEP accommodations**,** will be implemented to meet the student's needs in order that the student might succeed.
4. Testing accommodations and other information will be collected by the IEP chairperson at the home school.
5. Upon receipt of appropriate information, the IEP meeting will be conducted.

PLACEMENT OF DISABLED STUDENTS UNDER SECTION 504, REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Referrals of any student designated as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 shall be made to the Student Services Coordinator at the Career Technology Center. The principal of the center will ensure compliance with providing for educational services at the center.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Policy IJ: Technology and Instruction / Electronic Information Resources

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/21/2020 **| Last Revised Date:** 06/02/2022 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 04/27/2026

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.

Policy JNB: Seal of Biliteracy

Status:
ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/21/2020 **| Last Revised Date:** 05/07/2026 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 05/07/2026

Introduction

DeSoto County Schools is committed to preparing every student who enrolls in our schools to graduate from high school, college- and career-ready. Students will develop the skills, capacities, and dispositions necessary to participate fully in the 21st century economic, scientific, political, cultural, and intellectual life of our global society. Achieving high levels of academic proficiency in both English and at least one additional world language is an integral part of making this vision of student success a reality.

Therefore, to encourage and recognize linguistic proficiency and cultural literacy, DeSoto County Schools shall award the Seal of Biliteracy as a designation on a student's transcript, to each graduating high school student who demonstrates proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English.

Purpose of Seal of Biliteracy

- Recognize students who attain a high level of proficiency in two or more languages.
- Provide employers and postsecondary institutions with biliterate graduates who are able to perform high-level academic and professional tasks in both English and another language.
- Assign high status to students who demonstrate biliteracy in English and at least one additional world language.
- Revitalize, promote, and encourage the development of effective dual language immersion, world language, and heritage language pathways in grades 9-12 that prepare students to successfully engage in the 21st-century global marketplace.

- Build on students' strengths by recognizing that home language and culture are valuable assets that contribute to academic success.

Seal of Biliteracy Eligibility

Every student seeking the Seal of Biliteracy must complete an application with their school counselor to begin the process of obtaining the Seal of Biliteracy. Native or non-native English speakers who meet the following criteria prior to their senior year or during the spring semester before graduation are eligible to apply:

English:
Students must demonstrate proficiency in English by meeting language arts requirements for high school graduation or by demonstrating proficiency on a validated assessment of proficiency for English learners or other acceptable assessments as listed on the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy website. Assessments in English may include one or more of the following as determined by the district:
• State assessments of English Language Arts as required for all learners, or
• State assessments of English language development for English learners, or
• Other assessments identified by the state as appropriate for demonstrating English proficiency equivalent to meeting high school graduation requirements

World Languages:
The Mississippi Department of Education requires proof of proficiency in a language other than English by demonstrating an acceptable skill level on a validated test of proficiency. Assessments for determining the level of language proficiency must include:
• Adherence to the current ACTFL standards and proficiency scale
• Assessment in all language domains (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) or those appropriate to the given language

*Note: For the most current vetted list of assessments and updated requirements, see the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy website.
**Tribes may use existing or newly developed processes for determining language proficiency according to the unique needs of the language. Reading and writing components are to be used only when appropriate for the specific tribal language and approved by the tribe.
***A portfolio-based assessment may also be used to demonstrate language proficiency under certain circumstances, such as accommodating certain student disabilities or assessing a language for which there is not a computer assessment available. These circumstances and an example portfolio rubric are located on the Mississippi Seal of Biliteracy website.

Global Seal of Biliteracy

The global Seal of Biliteracy empowers recipients to showcase their language skills to educational institutions and employers worldwide. Mississippi students are eligible to earn this distinction at the Functional or Working Fluency level. All Global Seal of Biliteracy candidates must meet both First Language and Second Language requirements in order to receive the award.

To be awarded the Global Seal of Biliteracy, qualifying test scores must be submitted directly to the Global Seal of

Biliteracy by a school representative. Approved assessments are scored using one of two language proficiency frameworks: the CEFR Scale and ACTFL scale.

Recipients must also meet the First Language certification requirements. For credentialing purposes, the First Language is defined as the candidate's dominant language, the language in which the individual is most proficient in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Typically, this is the language of the individual's primary education. Verification of First Language proficiency requires the submission of qualifying grade-level documentation and/or test scores.

In addition, all candidates must meet Second Language certification requirements through approved testing. Qualifying test scores for the Second Language (or additional languages) must be submitted within 12 months of the test date (defined as the first date of testing).

Students who demonstrate proficiency in multiple languages may earn additional Global Seal of Biliteracy certifications, with each language recognized separately at the qualifying proficiency level.

***Note: For the most current vetted list of assessments and updated requirements, see the Global Seal website.**

Policy JGCDC: Administering Drugs to Students

Original Adopted Date: 07/24/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 11/20/2025 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 11/20/2025

MEDICATION POLICY

CONSENT FOR MEDICATION

For this policy, any reference to a "parent/guardian" includes any one of the following, in descending order of

priority, that is authorized and empowered to consent to the administration of medication to a student during school hours as referenced in MS Code 41-41-3:

1. The student's parent or custodian.
2. An adult brother or sister of a student.
3. The student's grandparent.
4. If none of the individuals listed above are reasonably available, an adult, of whom an individual listed above has approved and who is reasonably available, may act.
5. A student who is (18) years of age or older, as referenced in MS Code 41-41-203.
6. An emancipated minor (must meet one of the following criteria): is or has been married, has been adjudicated generally emancipated by a court of competent jurisdiction, or has been adjudicated emancipated for the purpose of making health care decisions by a court of competent jurisdiction.

ADMINISTERING MEDICATION

1. Administration of medication is foremost the responsibility of the parent/guardian. All medications that can be given outside of school hours without serious effects must be given before or after school. No narcotic pain medications will be given at school without prior authorization from the principal and/or Health Services Department at the Board of Education.
2. Medications will only be administered if:
    a. The school is provided an up-to-date physician's order (a prescription label is considered an order) and a medical authorization form signed by a parent/guardian to include the child's name, name of medication needed, and time of administration.
    b. Prescription medication must be supplied in the bottle dispensed by the pharmacy with the following on the label before the school can accept it: child's name, name of medication, how often the medication is to be given, the dosage, and the date of expiration.
    c. Non-prescription medication must be in the original packaging/bottle with the dosing instructions on it. A physician's signature is required on the Medication Authorization Form for all over-the-counter medication to be given at school.
3. Medications will not be accepted in household containers, envelopes, baggies, etc.
4. The first dose of any medication should be given at home in case there is an allergic reaction.
5. Medications are to be stored in a locked cabinet in a secure location. Medications requiring refrigeration will be stored in a refrigerator in a secure area (medication and food must be stored separately).
6. No medication will be administered without written parental/guardian consent. The schools will provide the parents/guardians with the necessary medication authorization forms**,** and it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to complete the form and return it to the school. The forms must be updated every school year and anytime there is a medication or dosage change. NO CHANGES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MEDICINE WILL BE MADE UNTIL THE FORM IS SUBMITTED to the designated staff member in the school. If there is a change in the dosage of medication, the parent/guardian must supply the school with a new doctor's order indicating the change.
7. The designated staff member will maintain a daily log of medications administered to each individual student and will maintain these records in a secure location with the medication. The log should contain the student's name, date, medication given, time it was given, and the initials of the person who gave the medication along with a signature. If a medication dose is missed, the designated staff member must document this in the daily log along with the reason why the medication was missed and notify the appropriate personnel. The school should keep medication logs on file for at least five (5) years.

8. Students that have asthma are allowed to keep their inhaler with them as long as they have an asthma plan**/**medication permission form signed by their doctor and on file with the school. These forms are provided by the schools and should be updated every year.
9. Diabetic students should provide the school they are attending with a Diabetes Medical Management Plan and a Quick Reference Emergency Plan signed by their physician. This plan should be updated each school year or upon a change in the student's prescribed regimen. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide all materials and equipment for diabetes care-related tasks. Diabetic supplies are to always be accessible to the student.
10. Epinephrine is prescribed for severe allergic reactions. A physician signed Severe Allergy Care Plan should be provided to the school by the parent/guardian in addition to the prescribed epinephrine. Students are entitled to possess and self-carry prescription epinephrine, but individual consideration will be given by the principal or principal designee to determine if the student can carry and self-administer their own medication or if a designated staff member should keep and administer the medication. The epinephrine should be stored as close to the student as possible, since it is for emergency use. Each school may maintain a supply of auto-injectable epinephrine at school in a secure and easily accessible location. At least one employee at each school is required to receive training from a registered nurse or a licensed medical physician in the administration of auto-injectable epinephrine. In compliance with MS Code 37-11-71, DCS authorizes a school nurse or trained school employee to administer auto-injectable epinephrine to a student who the school nurse or trained employee, in good faith, believes is having an anaphylactic reaction, whether or not the student has a prescription for epinephrine.
11. Seizure rescue medications are indicated for use for seizure activity as described by each individual physician. A physician-signed seizure care plan should be provided to the school by the parent/guardian in addition to the rescue medication to be given. It should be noted on each individual care plan where the medication will be stored (preferably as close to the student as possible) and at least one staff member should be trained on how to administer the medication in the event of an emergency.
12. Emergency medications should be taken on field trips (e.g. asthma inhalers, EpiPens, rescue seizure medication, and diabetic supplies).
13. The proper disposal of unused medications is important**,** and it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to obtain all unused medication from the school when the medication is discontinued, the school year ends, or the student transfers to another district or school. The unused medication must be picked up by the parent/guardian by the deadline set forth by the school nurse and/or principal**,** or it will be disposed of by a designated person at the school with a witness present. The medication disposal should be documented in the medication log and signed by both employees.
14. Schools will not provide medications to students.
15. Prescription drugs must be brought to the school by a responsible adult. A medication receiving form (see page 3 of policy) must be signed by the person bringing in the medication and an authorized staff member indicating the number of pills or amount of liquid received.
16. All prescription drugs will be counted weekly by two designated staff members.
17. Medications that are not FDA approved will not be administered at school.
18. For safety reasons, schools are not responsible for keeping extra supplies of prescription medication to give in case a dose is forgotten at home.
19. School employees have the right to refuse to administer medication if there is a custodial disagreement about the student being on medication.

20. If a student uses his/her medication in a manner other than prescribed, he/she may be subject to disciplinary action under the school codes. The disciplinary action shall not limit or restrict the student's immediate access to the medication.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

DeSoto County Schools does not allow the administration or use of medical cannabis while on district or school property. Students are absolutely prohibited from possessing any form of medical marijuana or cannabis derivatives. Possession of such items will result in disciplinary action as outlined in DCS Board Policy JD.

References:
MS Code 41-41-3
MS Code 41-41-203
MS Code 37-11-71
MS Code 37-11-72 - 37-11-72.2

TARDY POLICY

5 tardies – 1st verbal warning
10 tardies – 2nd verbal warning & phone call to parent/guardian
15 tardies – Mandatory Parent Conference w/Behavior Plan
20 tardies – 1 day ALC or Corporal Punishment (2 licks)
25 tardies – 2 days ALC or Corporal Punishment (3 licks)
30 tardies – 3 - 5 days ALC
35 tardies – Suspended 3 days with a disciplinary hearing.

***Student drivers are subject to losing driving privileges for violation of the tardy policy.**

Policy JD: Student Discipline

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 | **Last Revised Date:** 06/01/2023

CODE OF DISCIPLINE K-12

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

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

    b. 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.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

RPL list – Restricted Privilege List – If a student is suspended, given nine or more ALC days, goes to DCAC, is arrested off campus, or is in JDC, that student is added to the Restricted Privilege List. This means students will not be able to attend extra-curricular activities such as football, basketball, volleyball, etc. Games, pep rallies, plays, and will not be able to participate on athletic teams, etc. Until he or she is removed from the RPL list. This is reviewed every three months. The student cannot have any other incidents during this time, or he/she will not be removed from the RPL list.

Policy
JCBB: Gang Activity

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 11/01/2010 **| Last Revised Date:** 03/03/2022 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 01/23/2026

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 wellbeing 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.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]**Safety Announcement**

In an attempt to keep DeSoto County Schools safe for all students and staff, the following behaviors will not be tolerated:

- The use or possession of gang graffiti, gang drawings, gang writings, gang dress or gang activity
- Distribution of illegal drugs, prescription drugs or any substance dangerous to students (distribution includes giving substances to students)

Students who openly defy this warning(s) will be considered a threat to the safety of students and staff and suspended pending a disciplinary hearing. The student could be expelled from DeSoto County Schools.

Policy JCDAD: Bus Conduct

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 02/24/2017 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 04/27/2026

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.

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.

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.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Policy JCDB: Dress Code for Students

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 03/17/2008 **| Last Revised Date:** 04/04/2024 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 01/23/2026

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, bandanas, hoods, 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.

Last Review Date:_____
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

Original Adopted Date: 07/22/2010 **| Last Revised Date:** 07/18/2019 **| Last Reviewed Date:** 01/23/2026

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.

EMERGENCY PLANS

Fire Drill Instructions

1. **Make sure your evacuation route and alternative evacuation route are highlighted on the map of the school posted on your door.**
2. **When the fire alarm rings, make sure that students are quiet and walk in a single file line expeditiously to your rendezvous site.**
3. **Take a copy of your class roster and your red/green cards.**
4. **Make sure you close your classroom door.**
5. **Once at your rendezvous site, have students in a single file line behind you and call roll. Hold up the green card if all students**

are present and red if they are not. A principal will retrieve your attendance. Remain until the all-clear is given.

Tornado Drill Instructions

1. **Bring your rosters and make sure the classroom door is closed.**
2. **Escort students to designated areas and have them sit covering their heads.**
3. **Remain there until clearance is given.**

B/C Hall - goes to the B/C transition between wooden doors and fire doors.

A/D Hall - goes to the A/D transition between wooden doors and fire doors.

F Hall - goes to JROTC 2 room on Alumni Hall.

Athletics - go to their respective locker rooms.

Library - goes to the bookroom.

Counselor side - goes to the records room.

Office side - goes to Mrs. Padgett's closet.

Cafeteria staff - goes to an inside room with no glass.

CAFETERIA SAFETY PLAN - During lunches

Cafeteria front doors and serving line doors must be locked at all times.

However, they can be propped open.
This buys us precious time to get students and staff to safety

CAFÉ' - TORNADO

- **Coaches and Teachers on duty split up into two sections.**
- **The east side moves students into the ROTC2 room on Alumni Hall.**
- **The West side moves students into the Teacher's Lounge.**

CAFÉ' - LOCKDOWN

- **Two adults pull doors closed on each side of the front windows of the café'.**
- **All other teachers/coaches on duty begin moving students into the serving lines and through to the back of the kitchen as far as the students can go.**
- **Pull serving line doors closed as the students move through.**

Earthquake Drill

1. **Drop to the floor to prevent falls.**
2. **Get under your desk or a table if possible.**
3. **Cover your head, neck, and chest.**
4. **Hold on to something sturdy.**

All should remain calm and listen for instructions. Teachers should take class rosters with them in the event of an evacuation. Keep your classroom students together.

LOCKDOWN

Administration will announce that we are going into a lockdown drill.

In a real emergency, LOCKDOWN may be announced via intercom, megaphone, or other means necessary depending on the situation.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES:

1. **Make sure your door is locked and closed immediately. If you are in class with students, this should already be done. You may need to get students from bathrooms, hallways, etc., depending on your location and the severity of the situation.**
2. **Place your door pin in the floor.**
3. **Place students against the wall where they cannot be seen from the door window and make sure They STAY QUIET! There should be an appearance that no one is in the building.**
4. **Turn off the lights.**
5. **Close the blinds.**
6. **Do not open your door for anyone.**
7. **Administration will announce when the lockdown drill is over or in a real situation instruction will be given.**

Inclement Weather Policy and Information

Commonly asked questions regarding our school district's inclement weather policy

Where can parents find official information about school closures and/or delays?

DeSoto County Schools will make an official announcement regarding closures and delays on our school district website, DeSoto County Schools, on Memphis-area television stations, and through our school district's parent notification system. Even though social media may be used to announce closures and/or delays, that is not an official announcement. There is often misinformation that is communicated via social media, and we ask that our stakeholders only trust the three official sources (the district website, Memphis-area television stations, and the district notification system).

How are decisions made to close, open late, or dismiss early?

In order to make decisions regarding the timing of opening and closing school, district officials must consider information on current conditions along with the timing of expected weather. For example, please consider the timing implications of snow/ice that arrives at the following different times of the day:

An evening snow that concludes and provides time for snow/ice removal – This could result in a delayed opening to permit the clearing of roads, sidewalks, and entrances at the schools.

An overnight snow/ice situation - This could close schools if it is not possible to clear roads and sidewalks in time for school to open.

The prediction of snow/ice to begin during the school day - A decision could be made to open schools on time, monitor the weather, and dismiss early if necessary.

What type of plans should parents make for inclement weather and the school day?

District officials realize that inclement weather situations place a strain on parents. In order to be prepared for inclement weather, parents are asked to have three separate plans in place:

A plan for school closure
A plan for a delayed start to the school day
A plan for an early dismissal

If there are school closures, are school events also cancelled?

If school is closed for the day, school events are normally cancelled for that entire day and evening. If school is dismissed early, all after-school events are normally cancelled. If there is a field trip or school event scheduled and the school day is delayed by one or two hours, parents would need to contact the individual school to get more information regarding the status of the event.

If the school day is delayed, how does that affect pick-up times at the bus stops?

If the start of the school day is delayed one hour, students will be picked up at bus stops approximately one hour later than normal. If the start of the school day is delayed two hours, students will be picked up at bus stops approximately two hours later than normal. For more detailed information, parents can contact our school district's department of transportation.

Will students have to attend extra days of school to “make-up” for inclement weather days?

Make-up days are scheduled into the school calendar if needed to meet academic requirements. Students and parents should always be prepared to “make up” days.

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2008 | **Last Revised Date:** 05/02/2024 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 03/31/2026

SECTION 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices of the school system. To ensure the district's compliance with Section 504 as it applies to students with disabilities, the following procedures have been adopted.

1. If a student claims that he/she has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of a handicapping condition, in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or if the district has reason to believe that a student has a handicap which substantially limits a major life activity (and the student is ineligible for services under IDEA), the district shall convene a team of people who are knowledgeable of the student's educational needs to review and consider all pertinent information related to the suspected disability. This meeting shall be convened in a reasonable amount of time (within 30 days) after the district receives a written statement describing the specific discriminatory conduct or the district becomes aware of the student's impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.

2. The team described in paragraph 1 above shall determine whether the student is disabled under Section 504 and whether that disability substantially limits one or more major life activity (including major bodily functions). If such a determination is made, the team must further determine what, if any, accommodations are required on behalf of the district to allow the student an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities. If the student's parents disagree with the district's conclusion and recommendations, the parents shall be informed of their right to ask for an impartial hearing to decide the matter. Hearing requests shall be made in writing to the District 504 Coordinator giving specific reasons describing the discriminatory actions by the district and why the district's accommodations are not appropriate.

3. An impartial hearing shall be held within thirty (30) days of receipt of the written request. The district shall obtain as a hearing officer an individual who is not an employee of the district and who is knowledgeable of Section 504. The parent and student may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent them at their own expense. The district also may be represented by counsel.

4. The hearing officer shall conduct the hearing so as to give the parents an opportunity to present evidence supporting their claim that their child has been subjected to discriminatory treatment in violation of Section 504. The district shall be given the opportunity to present evidence supporting its position with respect to the student. A recording of the hearing will be made by the district, a copy of which will be provided to the

parents.

NOTE: The impartial hearing can be informal with the hearing officer controlling the flow of information from each party. For example, the hearing officer could ask the parties to make statements and present their evidence without resorting to attorneys conducting direct examination, cross examination, opening statements, closing arguments, etc.

5. The hearing officer shall make a decision within five (5) days after the conclusion of the hearing. The decision shall be given in writing to the district's 504 coordinator and the parents.

6. If either parents or the district is aggrieved by the decision of the hearing officer, the aggrieved party may request that the Superintendent of the district review the decision. Such review shall take place within ten (10) days of the request for a review.

7. The Superintendent may overrule, modify or uphold the hearing officer's decision. The review committee shall make its decision within ten (10) days of beginning deliberations on the matter and shall provide a written response to both parties.

8. If either party is aggrieved by the action of the Superintendent, an appeal may be taken to the Board of Education of the district at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The board, in its discretion, may allow a statement to be made by the parents and a representative of the district.

9. The district shall publish its policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of disability and shall inform parents of their rights under Section 504, including the right to examine records relevant to their child, the right to an impartial hearing with representation by counsel and the district's review procedure.

10. The Section 504 Coordinator for the district will be named by the board and published on the DeSoto County Schools' website with contact information provided.