



Olive Branch Middle School

6530 Blocker Street
Olive Branch, MS 38654
Phone 662-895-4610
Fax 662-895-7358

Dear Parents and Guardians of OBMS Students:

The handbook information is designed to provide you with information about various topics for Desoto County Schools and Olive Branch Middle School. It contains information from the school board policies about discipline, attendance, athletics, grades, and other areas. This is not designed to be a comprehensive list of all Desoto County School Board Policies. The policies are continuously updated throughout the school year, and all updated policies can be found on the Desoto County Schools website at www.desotocountyschools.org. Please review the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook with your child.

Thank you for your continued support of Olive Branch Middle School. Please feel free to contact us with any questions. We look forward to a successful school year.

Thank you,

Adam Sikes, Principal
Olive Branch Middle School

OLIVE BRANCH MIDDLE SCHOOL
6530 Blocker Street. Olive Branch, MS 38654 662-895-4610

Administration and Staff

Adam Sikes, Principal	Ashley Ginn, STC/MTSS
Lauren Germany, 6 th grade Assistant Principal	Stephanie White, Bookkeeper
Jodi Stidham, 7 th grade Assistant Principal	Tammy Shipp, MSIS
Malinda White, 8 th grade Assistant Principal	Alisa Davis, 6 th Receptionist
Rebecca Andreas, Counselor (6 th Grade, 7 th Last Names A-L)	Barbara Free, 7 th /8 th Receptionist
Shelley Tanner, Counselor (7 th Grade Last Names M-Z, 8 th Grade)	Shaemeka Hill, Attendance

DeSoto County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, age, or handicapping conditions and is an equal opportunity employer.

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MISSION STATEMENT OF OLIVE BRANCH MIDDLE SCHOOL

The mission of Olive Branch Middle School, in collaboration with parents and the community, is to provide a safe and supportive school that respects the individual needs of all students. OB Pride demands high expectations in both academics and character by integrating a cross disciplinary curriculum that supports students' intellectual and emotional growth.

DESOTO COUNTY SCHOOLS 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.

OB PRIDE EXPECTATIONS

P-Preparation
R-Respect
I-Integrity
D-Diligence
E-Excellence for All



2021-2022 Bell Schedule

Doors Open.....6:55 am
Tardy Bell7:10 am
School Dismissal.....2:50 pm

1st Period 7:10-7:59

2nd Period 8:02-8:51

Break 8:51-9:01

3rd Period 9:04-9:53

4th Period 9:56-10:45

5th Period 10:48-12:14

(6th Grade Lunch)10:44-11:14

(7th Grade Lunch)11:14-11:44

(8th Grade Lunch)11:44-12:14

6th Period 12:17-1:06

7th Period 1:09-1:58

8th Period 2:01-2:50

2021-2022 DeSoto County Schools Calendar

August 2, 2021	Teachers' First Day
August 5, 2021	Students' First Day
September 6, 2021	Labor Day Holiday
October 11, 2021	Fall Break
November 22-26, 2021	Thanksgiving Holidays
December 17, 2021	End First Semester
December 20, 2021 -	Christmas Holidays
January 2, 2022	
January 3 and 4, 2022	Teachers Return (Professional Development Days)
January 5, 2022	Students Return
January 17, 2022	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
February 18, 2022	Professional Development Day
February 21, 2022	Presidents' Day Holiday
March 14-18, 2022	Spring Break
April 15, 2022	Good Friday Holiday
April 18, 2022	Easter Break
May 24, 2022	Students' Last Day
May 25, 2022	Teachers' Last Day
Tentative Make-up Days: February 18, April 18, May 25, May 26, May 27	

OBMS 2021-2022 Athletic Schedules

Volleyball

8/16 OBMS v SMS (HOME)
8/23 OBMS @ HMS
8/30 OBMS @ HLMS
9/7 OBMS @ LCMS
9/13 OBMS v DCMS (HOME)
9/20 OBMS v LMS (HOME)
9/27 OBMS @ CHMS
7th Grade Tournament (Semi Oct. 4/Champ Oct. 5)
8th Grade Tournament (Semi Oct. 7/Champ Oct. 8)
*High Seed Hosts
*All games will start at 5:00 pm

7th Grade Football

9/21 Jamboree (DCMS)(Game time 5:00)
9/28 OBMS v CHMS (HOME)
10/5 OBMS @ LMS
10/12 OBMS v DCMS (HOME)
10/19 Championship Game (East #1 v West #1)
10/26 Extra Game (TBA)
*All games will start at 5:30 pm

8th Grade Football

9/2 OBMS @ HMS
9/9 OBMS v DCMS (HOME)
9/16 OBMS @ CHMS
9/23 OBMS v HLMS (HOME)
9/30 OBMS v SMS (HOME)
10/7 OBMS v LMS (HOME)
10/14 OBMS @ LCMS
10/28 Championship Game (#1 v. #2)
*All games will start at 5:30 pm
*High Seed host Championship Game

Soccer

11/1 OBMS @ HMS
11/4 OBMS @ LCMS
11/8 OBMS v LMS (HOME)
11/11 OBMS v SMS (HOME)
11/15 OBMS @ HLMS
11/18 OBMS v CHMS (HOME)
12/2 OBMS @ DCMS
Tournament (Week of Dec. 6th)

Basketball

11/11 OBMS @ LMS
11/18 OBMS v LCMS (HOME)
12/2 OBMS v HMS (HOME)
12/9 OBMS @ DCMS
1/13 OBMS v CHMS (HOME)
1/20 OBMS @ HLMS
1/27 OBMS v SMS (HOME)
7th Grade Girls Tournament Jan. 31 & Feb. 3
7th Grade Boys Tournament Feb. 1 & 4
8th Grade Girls Tournament Feb. 7 & 10
8th Grade Boys Tournament Feb. 8 & 11
(High Seed Hosts)
*Regular Season games: 1st four games -
boys will play @ 5 & 6 and girls @ 7 & 8
Last four games – girls will play @ 5 & 6
and boys @ 7 & 8.

DRESS CODE
(DCS Policy JCDB)

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. It will be treated as insubordination and will be handled as stated in the Code of Discipline of the DeSoto County Schools. *Insubordination is a Level II violation.*

First Violation: Administrator-Parent conference, home suspension, ALC, or in-school suspension.

Second Violation: School suspension (three days)

Repeated Times: Suspension from school pending a disciplinary hearing

1. Hair must be neat, clean and worn in a manner that does not interfere with vision or cause a disruption in the classroom. No combs, picks, rollers or extreme coloring will be allowed.
2. T-shirts with sleeves, white or colored, are acceptable. Shirts must be properly closed, zipped or buttoned.
3. No article of clothing that pertains to or depicts the following will be acceptable:
 1. Substances or activities illegal by law for minors, such as alcohol, drugs, tobacco, gambling
 2. Profane, suggestive or violent language
 3. Derogatory symbols; remarks directed to any ethnic group
4. Sufficient underclothes must be worn appropriately and must not be exposed.
5. Tank tops, tube tops, muscle shirts, spaghetti straps, thin straps, or tops that expose the midriff, any part of the bust, excessive part of the back, are excessively tight or are distracting in class are not permitted. No slits in shirts are to be above the waistline of pants or skirts. Shirts are to be tucked in. Blouses/tops made to be worn outside should be at least three (3) inches below the waistline and no longer than five (5) inches below the waistline.
6. Students in grades K thru 5 are allowed to wear shorts as part of their daily attire. Shorts should be walking or Bermuda shorts. Students in grades 6 thru 12 may wear walking shorts or Bermuda shorts that are knee length. They should not be excessively tight or baggy. Athletic shorts are not permitted unless they are a part of an approved gym class or athletic class/activity.
7. Knee length dresses and skirts are allowed. No slits in these skirts or dresses above the knee caps are allowed.

8. No spandex articles of clothing are allowed.
9. Shoes must be worn at all times, and no house shoes are allowed. Shoes with laces should be laced and tied.
10. No visible tattoos will be allowed. Neither male nor female students will be permitted to wear rings and/or studs in their noses, tongues, or any exposed body parts other than the ear and appropriate rings on fingers.
11. Coaches, physical education classes or any organized athletics have the option to ban all jewelry due to safety reasons and/or violation of the Mississippi High School Activity Association regulations.
12. Sunglasses, other than prescription, must be removed when inside the building.
13. All pants must be worn fitted to the waist, at the waist, with or without a belt. Belts must be worn and buckled appropriately for pants that have belt loops. Pants should fit appropriately. No baggy pants are allowed. No writing is to be on the seat of the pants, even the cheerleaders' uniforms and dance team.
14. Leggings are allowed when worn with a top that meets the dress length guidelines specified in #7.
15. Pants must have no exposed skin above the knee.
16. Hats, caps, sweatbands, or other head coverings are not to be worn in the buildings or on the grounds of the school except for medical reasons as prescribed by a physician. Head coverings as part of a religious belief will be allowed if there is sufficient proof the student is a practicing member of the religious sect. Head coverings may be worn if authorized by the faculty and/or administration, if it is part of a uniform (i.e., wearing a full baseball uniform during games or practice) or as deemed necessary.
17. Specific outfits designated for extracurricular activities and decisions concerning any questionable clothing will be left up to the discretion of the principal.
18. Local principals or their designee have the power and discretion to make all decisions on their campus.

Descriptor Title: CODE OF DISCIPLINE K-12	Descriptor Code: JD	Adopted Date: July, 2008
	Reviewed Date:	Revised Date: May, 2019

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: Mandatory Teacher-Student –Administrator-Parent Conference (Home Suspension)

Maximum: Corporal Punishment, ALC, 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 or possession of stolen 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 Inappropriate sexual conduct, including unwelcomed sexual contact, indecent exposure, 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.

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 weapons 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 suggest 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 shootings 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.

BUS CONDUCT *(DCS Policy JCDAD)*

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.

GANG ACTIVITY **(DCS Policy JCBB)**

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

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

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

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

Prohibited "gang symbols" may include any type of clothing decoration, jewelry, patches, bandanas, gang names, depiction of gang signs or symbols, and/or body signal/movement which is recognized as denoting a gang or is a sign, signal or movement utilized in connection with gang communications, including, but not limited to those appearing with the "Gang Awareness" pamphlet attached hereto as well as the additions thereto in the future. School officials will keep a booklet containing known "gang symbols" in each school office. In addition, prohibited "gang symbols" shall be published at the start of each school year in the Student Handbook. 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). School officials will publish notice of these prohibited names, signals, gestures, colors and symbols in the school office as made available by local police department and government authorities or otherwise made known to school officials. 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. The school will continually update the information posted in the school office relating to prohibited gang symbols and gang activity. Notice of updated prohibited gang activity and/or gang symbols will be sent home with each student, said notice shall advise students that the prohibited gang activity and gang symbols has been updated with updates maintained in the school office and the District website.

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.

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

(DCS Policy *JBD*)

Instructional Day

Pursuant to Mississippi Code 37-13-91, a parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child in this state shall cause the child to enroll in and attend a public school or legitimate nonpublic for the period of time that the child is of compulsory-school-age. Mississippi Code Section 37-9-14 (2)(u) states that School District Superintendents are “to comply in a timely manner with the compulsory education reporting requirements prescribed in Section 37-13-92(6).” The State Department of Education shall prescribe a uniform method for schools to utilize in reporting the unlawful absences to the school attendance officer.

The instructional day is therefore defined as a school day in which pupils are in regular attendance for scheduled classroom instruction for not less than sixty-three percent (63%) of the required instructional time, as fixed by the local school board for each school in the school district. The school board will review and approve the instructional time for each school in the school district annually prior to the beginning of the school year.

Each of the following shall constitute an excused absence:

1. Illness or injury which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.
2. When isolation is ordered by the county health officer, the State Board of Health, or an appropriate school official.
3. Death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family, which includes grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers and stepsisters. The absences must be approved by the principal or his/her designee.
4. A medical or dental appointment documented with the proper excuse from the attending physician/dentist upon return to school.
5. 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.
6. 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.)
7. Attendance at an authorized school activity with the prior approval of the principal or his/her designee.
8. 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.
9. An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the principal or his/her designee, that conditions are sufficient to warrant the child's non-attendance. However, no absences shall be excused by the principal or his/her designee, when any student suspensions or expulsions circumvent the intent and spirit of the compulsory attendance law.

Middle School Students (6-8)

Seven (7) absences may be excused by a note from a parent/guardian. (**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 seven (7) excused by a parent/guardian note **must** be excused by a note from a doctor or other documentation excusing said absence.

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 in writing within two (2) days by the school principal or his/her designee.

MAKE-UP WORK POLICY

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

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

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

GRADING POLICY *(DCS Policy IHA)*

GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR GRADING

Minimum Standards

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

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. The district provides a curriculum manual for each teacher.
2. Required lesson plans are developed and include all of the components outlined and approved by the school district.

DeSoto County Schools Grading Scale

A – 90 - 100	C – 70 - 79	F – 0 - 64
B – 80 - 89	D – 65 - 69	

Grades 6-8

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

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

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

7th Grade Compacted Math will be weighted at 1.05.

8th Grade Accelerated Math will be weighted at 1.05.

PROMOTION **(DCS Policy IHE)**

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

- 6th and 7th Grade – A minimum yearly average of 65 in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.
- 8th Grade – A minimum yearly average of 65 in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and 0.5 credit of Social Studies. *(In-state and out-of-state eighth grade transfers who are not eligible to receive 0.5 credit in Social Studies due to missing the required seat time, may be promoted if the average of their Social Studies transfer grade is a 65.)*

EXEMPTION POLICY (Grades 6-8)

Students in grades 6-8 may be exempt from final exams 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 semester average and does not have more than five (5) days/periods **unexcused** absences for final exams;
3. Student has not been assigned to an Alternative Learning Class (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)
4. **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.

TECHNOLOGY AND INSTRUCTION/ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES *(DCS Policy IJ)*

Technology and Instruction

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 the 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 the stolen device is not reported within three calendar days to a district school administrator, the employee or parent/guardian will be responsible for full replacement cost.

If a device is damaged, lost or stolen as a result of irresponsible behavior, the user or the parent may be responsible for the full replacement cost. The user or the parent/guardian will be responsible for full replacement cost of the device if not reported to district personnel within three calendar days of missing of damaged device.

In the event that a device is damaged, lost, or stolen, the user will assessed a deductible for the repair or replacement of the device. A chart listing replacement cost is included in this policy.

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 enrollement 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. This fee is to be assessed once per school year.
- Parents/Guardians shall pay a non-refundable annual support fee of \$12.50 for student grades K-5th for the use of a DeSoto County Electronic device. This fee is to be assessed once per school year.
- 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 totally damaged as a result of irresponsible behavior, the person the device is issued to 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.

Damaged Devices

Any damage must be reported to school authorities immediately. Power adapters, and sleeves, case 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 to 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: adaptor \$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 support staff member. 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 in personal devices; therefore the use of personal devices is not a viable alternative to a district provided device.

SMOKE FREE BUILDINGS (DCS Policy EBAB)

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 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.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY *(DCS Policy BAAB)*

Non-Discrimination 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 iniquities 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.

SPORTS ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS *(DCS Policy IDFA)*

Scholastic Requirements:

All students will meet the Mississippi High School Activities Association scholastic requirement for participation in the interscholastic sports and activities.

1. Students must maintain a grade point average of at least 2.0 or “C” average in order to participate in interscholastic sports/activities. Grade point averages will be calculated on the conclusion of the first semester using the semester averages of all courses the student is taking. Students who do not have a 2.0 or “C” average for the first semester will be ineligible for the second semester.
2. At the end of the school year, each student’s grade point average for the year will be assessed. This assessment will reflect the average for the entire year using the final grades for each course. A student who does not have a grade point average of at least 2.0 or “C” average will be ineligible for fall semester.

3. High school eligibility begins when a student enters ninth grade. To be eligible for the fall semester, a student must be promoted to the ninth grade with at least an overall 2.0 or “C” average for all eighth grade courses.
4. A student may become eligible for the second semester only once during his/her high school career if he/she fails the year-end average the previous year by achieving at least an overall 2.0 or “C” average at the end of the semester.
5. The head coach or director has the discretion to implement more stringent academic requirements. However, he or she must have the approval of the principal and must inform the students and parent of these requirements at tryouts/auditions.

Attendance Requirements:

A student must attend school 63% of his or her school day in order to participate in interscholastic sports/ activities practices, performances, or games.

Recognizing that occasionally unavoidable situations may arise, the principal or his designee has the discretion to waive this requirement when necessary.

**TEXTBOOK FINE AND DAMAGE REPLACEMENT
(DCS Policy ICFAC)**

Textbook Fine and Damage Replacement

In compliance with MS Code 37-7-301 (FF) the DeSoto County School District provides textbooks free of charge to students. It is the duty of each student to care for the textbooks to the best of his/her ability. Students are encouraged to provide book covers for each book issued to them. The student and/or his/her parent(s) or guardians shall be responsible for all books not returned by the student. Teachers are instructed to assess fines for amounts up to the cost of the book when it is damaged, defaced, or lost.

Students forfeit the right to take home textbooks until fines are paid. Report cards, transcripts, and/or diplomas, may be held and/or students may not be able to participate in graduation activities, extracurricular activities, and events until compensation is made for lost or damaged books.

According to MS Code 37-43-1 “Textbooks shall be defined as any medium or manual of instruction, which contains a systematic presentation of the principles of a subject and which constitutes a major instructional vehicle for that subject.”

All textbooks must be returned to the issuing school when promoted, transferred, graduated, or when attendance is terminated.

Damage

Missing/Damaged Barcode
Writing/drawing/scribbling in book
Torn pages, but still usable
Excess wear/damage but still usable
Cover of book damaged
Spine damaged
Water damaged but still usable
Broken binding
Water damaged, not usable
Pages missing/torn, not usable
Non-returned book
Obscene writing or drawing on or in the book

Fine

\$2.00
\$1.00 per page up to the cost of book
\$3.00 per page up to the cost of book
15% of cost of the book
25% of cost of the book
25% of cost of the book
25% of cost of the book
30% of cost of the book
Cost of the book
Cost of the book
Cost of the book
Cost of the book

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
(DCS Policy JAA)

Equal Educational Opportunities

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

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

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE/SCHOOL AGE
(DCS Policy JBA)

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 the §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 principal shall, within two (2) school days or within five (5) calendar days, whichever is less, report, on the form provided by the State Department of Education, the absences to the school attendance officer. The principal, or his/her designee, shall report any student suspensions or students 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 as “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.
- b. Illness or injury which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.
- 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 prior approval of the principal or his/her designee, except in the case of emergency.
- 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 judgement 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 judgement of the principal or his/her designee but shall not be withheld unless the extent of the absence would adversely affect the student’s education.)
- 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 FutureFarmers 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.

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

Process Standard 10 is as follows:

10. The schooldistrict implements procedures for monitoring and reporting student absences as specified in the Mississippi Compulsory Attendance Law. (Ms Code 37-13-91)

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

BULLYING
(DCS Policy JDDA)

Bullying and 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.

OLIVE BRANCH MIDDLE SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Assembly Programs Assemblies are held periodically in the school gymnasium, cafeteria, and auditorium. Students will give respect to all speakers and not talk while a speaker is talking. Good manners are always expected of students. Everyone is required to conduct himself/herself in a manner appropriate for the program being presented. Remember: Good behavior is expected – Great behavior will be rewarded!

Car Riders In the mornings and afternoons, parents are requested to drop off and pick up students in front of the school (Blocker Street). Maps are available online.

Car Use No student is allowed to drive a vehicle to or from the school grounds.

Care of Property School property is for the benefit and use of students. It is our desire that everyone will exhibit “OB Pride” in helping to keep the buildings and furniture clean and in good repair. No one should write on school desks, walls, or doors. Any student who damages, defaces, or destroys school property will be punished, and the parents will be liable for all damages. Students should not be on school property before or after school hours unless involved in a school-sponsored activity.

Checks The school offices will be happy to accept checks for the amount of workbooks, fees, etc. We will not be able to cash checks and provide change for students. One returned check must be cleared with cash; then no other checks will be accepted.

Credit Cards Credit cards may be used to make payments for student fees, trip payments, or extracurricular activities through the “Revopay” link on the OBMS school website. A 3% fee will be charged for all transactions made through Revopay. All fees go directly to Revopay and not Olive Branch Middle School. Payments must be made by 3:00 pm on the due date.

Make-up Work

The following steps must be followed to request assignments for extended absences:

1. Parents should contact the school counselor to request make up work.
2. Parents must give a 24 hour notice.
3. Assignments will be available at 2:30 in the main office/6th grade office the day following the request.

Inclement Weather In case of inclement weather, school closings will be announced on TV, radio, District autodialer, social media, and the DeSoto County Schools website. Please do not call the school. Excessive calls tie up critical time and resources for the office staff. Days missed due to weather will be rescheduled. School is in session for 180 days.

Insurance A low cost accident insurance policy is offered through the school. All students who do not have other hospitalization are encouraged to take out this policy. Each student will receive an insurance form at the beginning of the school year. All athletes, cheerleaders, and dance team members are required to take this policy if they are not covered by other insurance.

Late Arrivals and Early Departures Students arriving after 7:10 a.m. must sign in with the attendance office and receive a tardy slip before they will be admitted to class. Any student wishing to leave school early must be checked out by a responsible adult. Proper identification must be presented. If the adult is someone other than the student’s parent, a note from the parents will be required. These notes must be turned in to the office before school begins each morning.

Medical It is of the utmost importance that student registration forms are filled out in full so that parents can be reached in case of an emergency. The school will not have medication such as aspirin available for students. Medication is to be left with appropriate school personnel for distribution to students along with instructions regarding the nature of the medication and the appropriate dosage and time when the student should take the medicine. Medical authorization from the student’s doctor is required for the school nurse to distribute medication. Students are not to carry medications in their backpacks without prior administrator approval. Parents need to make prior arrangements for their children in case they become too ill to remain at school.

Prohibited Items Olive Branch Middle School will not be responsible for lost, damaged, stolen, or personal items (cell phones, EarPods, wallets, cash, and anything of similar nature not listed).

Safety Drills: Olive Branch Middle School and Desoto County Schools are committed to student safety. During the year, OBMS will be conducting multiple drills which include fire, tornado, lockdown, intruder, and earthquake drills. OBMS will follow all guidelines approved by Mississippi Department of Education, Mississippi Department of Health, and CDC.

School Hours School hours are from **6:55 a.m. until 2:50 p.m.** The school opens at 6:55 a.m. Students must leave the campus by 3:15 unless they are involved in a supervised activity. Office hours are from 7:00 a.m. until 3:20 p.m.

School Lunches You may contact the Food Service Department at (662) 429-5271. A menu is posted monthly on their website. Breakfast and lunch will be provided for **FREE** to students during the 2021-2022 school year.

Students will use the Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) ID instead of the social security number for all ID purposes (including the cafeteria). Parents will also have to use this **MSIS ID** when using www.mealpayplus.com.

No outside food (ex. Fastfood or food ordered through a food delivery service) will be accepted.

Solicitations by Students The collection of money and the participation of the Desoto County Schools in the collection of money for various charitable and welfare purposes shall be subject to approval of the principal. All sales and money collections must be approved by the principal. Fund-raising activities are restricted to school organizations only.

Student Fees, Fines, and Charges Fees may be charged to students to cover expenses for courses in which students use consumable items. All fees must be justified and itemized in writing by the teacher charging the fee. In addition, any fee must be approved by the building principal and must comply with DCS policy. The lost or damaged textbooks fee can be found in DCS policy *IFAC*.

Student Email Addresses

Each student at OBMS is assigned an email address as well as cloud based storage. The email and storage service is provided through DeSoto County Schools. Teachers and studnets may use this email address for classroom and curriculum purposes. Teachers do not have access to student passwords. Students are responsible for remembering their passwords. Any inappropriate use of this service is subject to disciplinary actions according to the DeSoto County Schools code of conduct.

OBMS TARDY PROCEDURES. *Our tardy policy is based on one semester.*

Morning Tardies

1. Tardies 1-3 – Warning issued to student
2. Tardy 4 – Parent Notification
2. Tardy 6 – Mandatory Parent Conference
3. Tardy 8 – Lunch Detention
4. Tardy 10 – 1 Week Lunch Detention
5. Tardy 12 and up – Student will be placed in ALC for the remainder of that day.
6. Tardy 15 – Suspension with disciplinary hearing

Period Tardies-Students who are not in the room (fully across the threshold) when the bell stops ringing are tardy.

1. Tardy 1-2 Warning
2. On the 3rd tardy – Parents will be notified.
3. On the 5th tardy, students will be assigned Lunch Detention.
4. On the 7th tardy, students will receive a mandatory parent conference.
5. On the 9th tardy, students will be assigned 1 week of Lunch Detention
6. On the 10th and consecutive tardy, students will be given 1 day of ALC.
7. On the 15th tardy it will be considered a Repeated and Flagrant violation. Student will be suspended with a disciplinary hearing.

Telephone Use Due to the heavy volume of business in the school office, it is requested that parents do not call the school to have messages delivered to their children except in cases of emergency. Parents should try to make

arrangements with their children before they come to school. Students are to use the office telephone only in cases of real need, such as illness requiring a student to go home. Students will not be called from class to speak to a parent or to make a phone call to a parent.

Visitors: Visitors will be limited for the 2021-2022 school year. Visitors need to be approved by school administration. Visitors must check-in in the 6th grade office or the main office in the 7th/8th grade building.

COMMUNICATION and SOCIAL MEDIA

Auto Dialer Auto Dialer is used as a communication tool to parents. Students who miss one or more periods will have their parent notified by phone that evening. Other notifications are reminders for report cards as well as state testing.

Email Teacher email contact information may be found on the school website.

Web Page The Olive Branch Middle School web page contains information about our school. On the website you can find information on principals and staff, cafeteria, calendars, bus routes, and announcements. You can also find pictures of our athletic teams and organizations. Please feel free to visit and learn more about our school. <http://obm.desotocountyschools.org>

Remind: Both the school and many classroom teachers use *Remind* to send out important announcements. Parents may sign up for the OBMS general Remind account by texting @sikesob to 81010

School Status: School status will be used to communicate with parents through text, phone or email.

Schoology: Schoology is the new online learning management system that DeSoto County Schools will use as an addition to teacher webpages. Teachers will post information about daily assignments, quizzes, tests, etc.

Parent Portal: Parent Portal allows parents live access to their student's attendance, grades, and discipline. You can gain access to Parent Portal by filling out a request form and showing proper identification in the front office.

Facebook: Search for Olive Branch Middle School

Instagram: Search for Olive Branch Middle School or obmsquistor

Twitter: Search for Olive Branch Middle School or @TweetDCS_OBMS_

SCHOOL SERVICES AND CLASSES OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Band The band classes are open to all interested students in grades six, seven, and eight.

Carnegie Units One Carnegie credit is given to students who successfully complete Accelerated Math 8, 8th Grade Math, 7th Compacted math, and Cyber Foundations. One half credit will be given to students who successfully complete Mississippi Studies and World Geography in 8th grade.

Cheer/Dance Members are selected from eligible sixth and seventh graders at the end of each academic year for the following year's squad. In addition to ability, those who are selected must have an overall "C" average and acceptable behavior both at school and in the community.

Counseling Services Students and parents are encouraged to contact the school guidance counselors, who are available to help with a variety of student needs. Your counselor can provide information about subjects you need to take, scheduling your classes, and personal/social problems with which you need assistance.

Fellowship of Christian Students The Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) is a nondenominational organization. FCS membership is open to all students and has a student elected board. FCS builds positive leadership through school and community service.

Gifted Education Program (6th grade) Each middle school has a gifted education program for the intellectually gifted. Certified gifted education teachers focus on the areas of thinking skills, creativity, communication skills, research skills, and leadership skills. For specific information see the gifted education teachers or counselors.

Library Services A full-time librarian is available to help students learn reference skills. The librarian encourages students to read and has books that should be of special interest to all students. Students should treat books with care so that others may enjoy them. Fines will be charged for damaged, lost, or late books.

Chorus Chorus classes are open to all interested students. Classes consist of general chorus and advanced choirs.

Physical Education In grades seven and eight, physical education (PE) classes are available as elective courses. In these classes, students are introduced to a variety of sports such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, aerobics, football, and track. Students who participate in sports must be able to participate in the games and meets which are held in the afternoon, at night, and on Saturday depending on the sport.

School Yearbooks School yearbooks are published each year depicting every area of school life. Eligible students can apply to be part of the yearbook staff. Orders are taken for yearbooks during the fall for spring delivery.

Sixth Grade Activities Sixth grade students will participate in the following activities as part of the regular schedule: band (by choice), choir, P.E. (activities are subject to change).

PARENT NOTE EXCUSE FORM

Student's Legal Name _____

Date of Absence(s): _____

School: _____

Please excuse _____ (Student's Full Name) for being absent on the days listed above.

Please check the absence reason that applies.

_____ Illness or injury.

_____ Death or serious illness of immediate family member.

_____ Court appearance.

_____ Other reason.

Explanation _____

This excuse must be received within 2 days of your child's absence. If an excuse is not received in the time required, the absence will be considered unexcused. If you have any questions, please contact the Attendance Clerk, at the school.

Parent Signature _____ Date: _____

PARENT NOTE EXCUSE FORM

Student's Legal Name _____

Date of Absence(s): _____

School: _____

Please excuse _____ (Student's Full Name) for being absent on the days listed above.

Please check the absence reason that applies.

_____ Illness or injury.

_____ Death or serious illness of immediate family member.

_____ Court appearance.

_____ Other reason.

Explanation _____

This excuse must be received within 2 days of your child's absence. If an excuse is not received in the time required, the absence will be considered unexcused. If you have any questions, please contact the Attendance Clerk, at the school.

Parent Signature _____ Date: _____

2021-2022 Olive Branch Middle School Student Handbook Consent Form

*** * * * Please sign and return this form to your child's school. * * * ***

Dear Parents,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all that you do to make Olive Branch Middle School a success. The handbook contains rules, regulations, discipline codes, and many other details that pertain to you and your child throughout the school year. Please make sure that you and your child take time to read through the handbook and sign the form below stating that you have read and understand the entire handbook and its rules and return the signature sheet to the student's homeroom teacher. We thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,
Olive Branch Middle School Staff

I, _____, the parent/legal guardian of _____
(Print Name) (Print Name)
have read and understand ALL the policies, procedures, and guidelines in the Olive Branch Middle School student handbook issued to my child.

Student's Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

**I would like a printed copy of the OBMS Student Handbook – Initial Here _____

DESOTO COUNTY SCHOOLS 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 of possession of gang graffiti, gang drawings, gang writings, gang dress, or gang activity.
- Distribution of illegal drugs, prescription drugs, or substances dangerous to students (Distribution includes giving substances to students)
- Students involved in the above activities will be suspended for a period of no less than three (3) days, have a disciplinary hearing and may be expelled.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

*** * Please sign and return this form to your child's school. * * * ***
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so it can be torn out and turned in with your signature.**