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# **DeSoto County Schools**

*Excellence is a Commitment*

## **Elementary/Intermediate Student and Parent Handbook**

**2016-2017 School Year**

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# **Philosophy of DeSoto County Schools**

DeSoto County School District's primary goal is to develop a healthy learning environment so that our students may become useful citizens in our changing society. The environment encourages our pupils to develop their capabilities physically, socially, intellectually, and morally.

Education which encourages expression, respect for others, self-discipline, and a positive self-concept will assist each child to function effectively in our democratic society.

The school should be an integral part of the community, as learning is greatly enhanced through parents, teachers, and students who share a common bond of understanding.

## **Superintendent's Message**

Dear Parents:

I would like to take this opportunity to say I am very excited about this upcoming school year. DeSoto County Schools has been recognized as one of the top school districts in Mississippi, and I truly believe that we have the potential to be one of the best school districts in the nation.

As the parent of an elementary school student and a middle school student in DeSoto County Schools, I can relate to the needs of our parents. First and foremost, I want to make sure that we have measures in place to provide a safe learning environment for all of our students. I know that every parent wants their children to be safe at school, and I also believe that students must feel safe before learning can take place. Additionally, I want to make sure that our students have every opportunity to be successful in all facets of their lives including academics and extracurricular activities. As Superintendent, I look forward to seeing our students pursue their goals, and I hope that I can be of assistance to them along the way.

Exciting days lie ahead for DeSoto County Schools, and I appreciate your support of our students and teachers.

Sincerely,  
Cory Uselton  
Superintendent of Education

# Instructional Program Accreditation

Our school is part of the DeSoto County School District, which is the largest school district in the state of Mississippi. All elementary and intermediate schools in the district are fully accredited by the Mississippi Department of Education and AdvancED (Formerly Southern Association of Colleges and Schools).

## School Admissions (JBC)

The DeSoto County School District will comply with age requirements for entry into kindergarten and grade one as prescribed by law.

### I. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

- A. Except for those students who have been legally transferred, each minor child seeking to enroll in the district shall be a resident. All students shall register at the school they are assigned to attend.
- B. Any new student enrolling in the DeSoto County School District or any continuing student whose residence has changed shall be accompanied to enrollment by the custodial parent, legal guardian, or adult agent of a social service agency of the district who shall register the minor child for admission, except students who have been legally transferred. The accompanying adult shall be required to verify his/her residence as herein provided as part of the registration process. At the time of enrollment, the student's social security number will be requested. If no social security number is available to the district, the student's Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) number will be used to identify and track the student.
- C. No child will be allowed to enroll in any grade (K-12) or attend any school without a certified birth certificate. No child in grades K through 12 shall be allowed to enroll in or attend any school without a valid immunization certificate. Valid certificates include:
  - 1. Form 121 – Certificate of Compliance
  - 2. Form 122 – Medical Exemption Certificate
  - 3. Temp 121 – Temporary Compliance Certificate

The Temporary Compliance Certificate, Temp 121, is not valid after the date shown. After that date, the principal shall deny school attendance by such child unless or until the principal is furnished another Temporary Compliance Certificate, Temp 121, or a Certificate of Compliance, Form 121, or a Medical Exemption Certificate, Form 122.

- D. Subject to the provisions of Paragraph E below, any child who transfers from an out-of-state public or private school in which that state's law provides for a first grade or kindergarten enrollment date subsequent to September 1, shall be allowed to enroll in this school district at the same grade level as their prior out-of-state enrollment, if:
1. The parent or legal guardian of such child was a legal resident of the state from which the child is transferring;
  2. The out-of-state school from which the child is transferring is duly accredited by that state's appropriate accrediting authority;
  3. Such child was legally enrolled in a public or private school for a minimum of four (4) weeks in the previous state; and
  4. The DeSoto County School District superintendent or his designee has determined that the child was making satisfactory educational progress in the previous state.
- E. When any child applies for admission or enrollment, the parent, legal guardian or child (in the absence of an accompanying parent or legal guardian) shall indicate on the school registration form if the enrolling child has been expelled from any public or private school or is currently a party to an expulsion proceeding. Students who have been expelled or suspended by another school district and who subsequently apply for admission to the DeSoto County School District shall not be eligible to enroll in any DeSoto County school until they are eligible for readmission to and have actually attended classes in their previous school or produce a document showing a reinstatement following their suspension or expulsion. If a student enrolls in the DeSoto County School District and the district learns of an expulsion from another district, the student may be immediately dropped from the school roll.

## **II. RESIDENCE VERIFICATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL**

**STUDENTS:** The definition of residence for school attendance purposes is: the student physically resides full time with his/her parent (must be custodial parent) or legal guardian (as ordered by a judge for other than education purposes), weekdays/nights and weekends, at a place of abode located within the limits of the DeSoto County School District year-round. Except for those students who have been legally transferred, each student identified in paragraph B above must establish residency in the following manner:

### **A. Students Living With Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s)**

All legal guardians must provide a certified copy of filed petition for guardianship, if pending, and final decree, when granted. (The school will contact and meet only with the legal guardian of the student) When a certified copy of the Court Decree (or petition, if pending) is received declaring the district resident to be the legal guardian of the student, such decree or petition must declare that the guardianship was formed for a purpose other than establishing residency for school district attendance purposes.

The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of all students must provide the district with two (2) of the following documents (one of which must be item number one (1) as listed below):

1. Current (within the school year) mortgage documents (no mortgage booklets) or property deed, filed Homestead Exemption Application Form, a tax receipt, apartment/home lease, rental agreement, or tax display document;
2. A utility bill (water, gas, electric, current at time of registration);
3. DeSoto County automobile registration receipt (valid during current school year);
4. Government mailing documentation (SSI, WIC, Economic Assistance, Medicaid, TANF, or CHIPS);
5. Any other proof deemed acceptable by the school district.

In the event that the above listed requirements cannot be provided, residency may be established by submitting documentation to the Director of Residency.

Parents of students living with another family will be required, where applicable, to provide an “Affidavit of Residency”.

#### B. Homeless Children

When a child is determined to be homeless as defined by the Stewart B. McKinney Act 42 USC Section 11432 (e) and 11302 (a), this school district shall consider and take enrollment action that is in the best interest of the child pursuant to 42 USC 11432 (e) (3).

#### C. Students Living With Adults Other Than Parents Or Legal Guardians:

1. The non-parent(s) claiming district residency must meet the same criteria of subparagraph (A), required of a parent or legal guardian.
2. The adult must provide the school with legal guardianship or custodial papers and provide documentation fully explaining the reason(s) (other than school attendance zone or district preference) for this arrangement. The superintendent or his/her designee will make the necessary factual determinations. Examples of situations where guardianship authority of an adult will be recognized to establish residency of the minor include but are not limited to the following:
  - a. Death or serious illness of the child’s parent(s) or guardian;
  - b. Abandonment of the child;
  - c. Child abuse or neglect;
  - d. Seriously unstable family relationships or undesirable conditions in the home of the child’s parents or guardians having a documented detrimental effect on the child;
  - e. Students enrolled in recognized exchange programs residing with host families;
  - f. Incarceration of a parent.
3. Any person who has assumed responsibility for the care and custody of the child shall be expected to begin the process of seeking legal guardianship before enrollment of the child and an approximate completion date must be given.

4. Any legal guardianship formed for the purpose of establishing residency for school district attendance purposes shall not be recognized by the DeSoto County Board of Education.
- D. Each time a student changes schools within the district because of a move or academic progression, residency documentation will be required. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must provide the school with two (2) of the following documents (one of which must be item number one (1) as listed below):
1. Current (within the school year) mortgage documents (no mortgage booklets) or property deed, filed Homestead Exemption Application Form, a tax receipt, apartment/home lease, rental agreement, or a tax display document;
  2. A utility bill (water, gas, electric, current at time of registration);
  3. DeSoto County automobile registration receipt (valid during current school year);
  4. Government mailing documentation (SSI, WIC, Economic Assistance, Medicaid, TANF, or CHIPS);
  5. Any other proof deemed acceptable by the school district.

In the event that the above listed requirements cannot be provided, residency may be established by submitting documentation to the Director of Residency.

Any court ordered procedure shall take precedence over any procedure contained herein.

The requirements of Section II (A) above are minimum requirements and this school district may require additional documentation and verification at any time.

The provisions of this policy do not apply to students who reside outside the school district, but who have legally transferred into the school district through employment of the parent with the DeSoto County School District.

**III. TEMPORARY ENROLLMENT:** Students will be allowed temporary enrollment status if the following documents are presented and approved by a DCS official:

- A. A temporary immunization form from the DeSoto County Health Department;
- B. A copy of an official request for a birth certificate and a copy of the money order used to order the certificate.
- C. An official letter from a lawyer or legal agency that affirms the process for custodial or guardianship process has begun for one of the reasons listed in section II (C) (2) of this policy.

Whenever necessary, the following forms of residence verification may be used to establish a thirty (30) day temporary enrollment. By the thirtieth (30<sup>th</sup>) day, additional proofs of residency must be provided. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a student seeking temporary enrollment must provide the district with at least one (1) of the following documents:

1. Valid driver's license;
2. Government mailing documentation;
3. Automobile registration (during current school year);
4. State issued government identification;
5. Any other proof deemed acceptable by the school district

IV. ATTENDANCE POLICY: The district attendance policy is outlined in detail each year in the *Student Handbook*. Once school has begun, students who enroll in the DeSoto County School District must provide documentation of school attendance prior to that date in accordance with the Mississippi compulsory attendance laws.

REF.: MS CODE § 37-15-1 (2007)

MS CODE § 37-15-3 (1995)

MS CODE § 37-15-9 (2003)

MS CODE § 37-15-11 (2002)

MS CODE § 37-15-13 (1994)

MS CODE § 37-15-29 (1992)

MS CODE § 37-15-33 (1988)

MS CODE § 41-23-37 (1983)

42 United States Code Sections 11431 – 11434

## Dismissals/Checkouts

Students are not to leave the school campus without permission. Students who must leave school during the school day, before their usual dismissal time, will be released only to a parent/guardian or an adult designee.

## Transferring to Another School

When transferring to another school in or out of district due to a move or a Board approved transfer, the following must be done:

1. Notify the principal's office no later than the day before withdrawing.
2. Return all textbooks and library books.
3. Pay all monies owed.
4. Obtain transfer forms. Official records will be sent on request from the new school.
5. If student is served by Special Ed., ask for a copy of his/her IEP to take to the new school.

**NOTE: Transfer requests to move from one DeSoto County attendance center to another within the district must be approved by the Board of Education. The only Board approved transfers granted are for legal, medical, psychological and academic reasons.**

## 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 & Career Readiness Standards for Language Arts and Mathematics and the Mississippi Content Frameworks for Science and Social Studies.

### **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 & Career 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

B- 80-89

C- 70-79

D- 65-69

F- 0-64

Kindergarten, first and second grade students' science and social studies skills are assessed within the reading standards.

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

S – Satisfactory

N – Needs Improvement

U – Unsatisfactory

# Grading Policies

## **Kindergarten, First and Second Grade:**

Kindergarten, first and second grade students must master 70% of the Mathematics standards and 70% of the Language Arts standards. In addition, kindergarten students must be able to read at a Level C according to the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment. First grade students must read at a Level I according to the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment. Second grade students must read at a Level M according to the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment.

## **Grades 3-5:**

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

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

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

# Promotion Policies

## **Kindergarten:**

Students must meet the following requirements to be promoted to first grade.

- Read at a Level C as indicated by the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment
- Master 70% of the English/Language Arts Standards
- Master 70% of the Mathematics Standards

## **First Grade:**

Students must meet the following requirements to be promoted to second grade.

- Read at a Level I as indicated by the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment
- Master 70% of the English/Language Arts Standards
- Master 70% of the Mathematics Standards

## **Second Grade:**

Students must meet the following requirements to be promoted to second grade.

- Read at a Level M as indicated by the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment
- Master 70% of the English/Language Arts Standards
- Master 70% of the Mathematics Standards

## **Third Grade:**

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

- A minimum yearly average of 65 in English/Language Arts and Mathematics
- Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, a student scoring at the lowest achievement level in reading on the established state assessment for third grade will not be promoted to fourth grade unless the student meets the good cause exemptions for promotion as outlined in the Mississippi Literacy-based Promotion Act

## **Fourth Grade – Fifth Grade:**

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

- A minimum yearly average of 65 in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies

# **Special Education**

The Department of Special Education provides support to students with disabilities requiring specialized instruction to enhance the opportunity in the general curriculum. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are implemented to provide instruction in the least restrictive environment and a continuum of services and programming. IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) requires that all students with disabilities receive education in the general education classroom environment to the maximum extent appropriate. Some district wide classes have been established to serve students with low incidence disabilities.

Educational programming and services for students with the following disabilities are available after an appropriate eligibility ruling has been received through proper identification and testing procedures. DeSoto

County Schools follows the identification and procedures set forth by IDEA and MDE:

Autism (AU)	Language/Speech Impaired (L/S)
Deaf-Blind (DB)	Intellectual Disability (ID)
Multiple Disabilities (MD)	Orthopedic Impairment (OI)
Developmentally Delayed (DD)	Other Health Impaired (OHI)
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	Emotional Disability (EmD)
Visually Impaired (VI)	Hearing Impaired (HI)
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	

## **Leadership Development and Gifted Education**

The Department of Leadership Development promotes opportunities for students to develop leadership skills through experiences designed to expose students to a variety of learning opportunities and competitions. A few of these experiences include chess, Knowledge Bowl, writing, speech and debate competitions, as well as science fairs, inventors fairs, and reading fairs. These opportunities help students to discover their interests and maximize their potential.

Gifted Education services are supported by the Department of Leadership Development and offer three (3) programs for students who meet state eligibility criteria for exceptional intellectual, artistic, or academic gifts. Students in the second through sixth grades may qualify for the intellectually gifted program. These students are pulled from the general education classroom for at least five (5) hours a week to develop thinking, creativity, leadership, group dynamics, research, emotional awareness, career development, and appreciation for the visual and performing arts. Artistically gifted and academically gifted English programs are offered to high school students.

## **Department of Student Intervention**

The Department of Student Intervention works with all schools to provide support to students who have difficulty meeting grade level standards in academic progression, as well as, behavioral expectations.

Every school has an Intervention Support Team that consists of teachers, counselors, and administrators. This Team assists school personnel in

developing academic and behavioral interventions for students demonstrating a need for this support. Parents are encouraged to be involved in this Team.

According to the Mississippi Department of Education Board Policy, there are three levels to the support. A student may progress through the levels based on how the student responds to the interventions. Intervention Specialists are assigned to each school to help in the implementation of this required process. Additionally, Intervention Supervisors are assigned to each school to provide assistance and to supervise this process.

The Department of Intervention also identifies students who may be in need of a Section 504 Plan. This Plan is a component of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and federal compliance is expected by the Office of Civil Rights. No student should experience discrimination by any student or school personnel based on the student's race, religious beliefs, ethnicity, sex, gender, or any other civil right.

If a student perceives discrimination, he should inform an administrator. The parent or the school administration will contact the Office of General Counsel to investigate and to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Parents should inform the administration of their concerns, and the administration will provide the parent with his/her due process and complaint rights. If a parent feels that he/she should pursue further action, DeSoto County Schools respects the parent's choice. Intervention Supervisors, as well as the Director of Compliance, will respond to the parent's complaint and will assist in the investigation.

Parents may contact any of the school's personnel or the Department of General Counsel at any time. The parent can request that their child participate in the three-tier intervention process or request for a Comprehensive Assessment. Parents have the right to file a formal complaint with the DeSoto County School Board, the MS Department of Education, or the Office of Civil Rights. The Office of General Counsel will respond to all parental contacts.

## **Section 504**

A parent, staff member, student, or personnel may request a Section 504 Plan. This request may be made to the school's Section 504 Coordinator. A meeting will be scheduled at the school to discuss a student's possible substantial limitation to access the facility and/or educational benefit. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices of the DeSoto County School system.

# **Title Programs**

## **Title I, Part A**

The purpose of Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization bill is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and State academic assessments.

Title I provides additional instructional resources to help students meet the high academic standards set by the Mississippi Department of Education in Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, and Testing/Evaluation. All students in Title schools benefit from Title I directly or indirectly since the funds provide extra help for any child needing academic assistance.

One of the major themes in ESSA is parental involvement. Active parent involvement includes a partnership of schools and parents working together to achieve the highest educational growth for their children. Such partnerships are essential if both families and schools are to serve our children and ensure our future. Parents and parental involvement form the critical link between the child and the school. Parental involvement is an ongoing, changing, and developing process which results in positive outcomes for all participants.

## **Title II, Part A — Preparing, Training and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, and Other School Leaders**

Title II, Part A works to increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality.

## **Title III — English Language Learners**

Title III promotes high quality education for English Language Learners (ELL). The goal is to ensure that ELL students, including immigrant children and youth, develop English proficiency and meet the same academic content and achievement standards required of all children.

Emphasis is placed on high academic standards, school accountability, professional development, and parent involvement.

# Mississippi Compulsory School Law (JBA)

HB 1530 is an act to amend Section 37-13-91, Mississippi Code of 1972, to provide that a compulsory school-age child who is absent more than 37% of the instructional day must be considered absent the entire day. Therefore, for the purposes of determining and reporting attendance, a pupil must be present for at least sixty-three percent (63%) of the instructional day to be considered present the entire school day.

The instructional day is therefore defined as a school day in which both teachers and 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.

“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. However, the parent or guardian of any child enrolled in a full-day public school kindergarten program shall be allowed to disenroll the child from the program on a one-time basis, and such child shall not be deemed a compulsory school-age child until the child attains the age of six (6) years. MS Code 37-13-91 (2) (f) (2013)

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

- a. Physically, mentally, or emotionally incapable of attending school as determined by the appropriate school official based upon sufficient medical documentation;
- b. Enrolled in and pursuing a course of special education, remedial education or education for handicapped or physically or mentally disadvantaged children; or
- c. 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 or his designee 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 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.

## **Attendance/Excused Absences K-12 (JBD)**

HB 1530 is an act to amend Section 37-13-91, Mississippi Code of 1972, to provide that a compulsory school-age child who is absent more than 37% of the instructional day must be considered absent the entire day. Therefore, for the purposes of determining and reporting attendance, a pupil must be present for at least sixty-three percent (63%) of the instructional day to be considered present the entire school day.

The instructional day is therefore defined as a school day in which both teachers and 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 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 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 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.

### **Elementary School Students (K-5)**

- Seven (7) absences may be excused by a note from the parent/guardian.
- **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.

**\*6<sup>th</sup> graders who are housed on an elementary campus will follow elementary guidelines.**

### **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.

Standard 10 is as follows:

The school district implements procedures for monitoring and reporting student absences as specified in the Mississippi Compulsory Attendance Law. MS Code 37-13-91

## **DeSoto County Schools Code of Discipline- Grades K-12 (JD)**

### **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 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.

### **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 Initiating or participating in any unacceptable physical contact
- 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, 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
- \*2-4 Possession and/or use of tobacco products (including smokeless tobacco)
- \*2-5 Exhibiting any hostile physical actions
- \*\*2-6 Unauthorized possession or use of personal electronic devices (An electronic device is defined as any device that a student is in possession of which electronically communicates, sends, receives, stores, reproduces or displays voice and/or text communication or data).

### **Disciplinary Action:**

#### First Violation

Minimum: Administrator-Conference, ALC, home suspension, 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, home suspension, 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 possession or use of personal electronic devices:

1<sup>st</sup> Offense: First offense will result in confiscation of the device and 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.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: School will take and keep device for 5 school days. After the device is retained for 5 school days, the parent/guardian shall pay \$20, which represents the actual cost associated with the confiscation and storage of the device, subject to waiver for economic hardship. After the device is retained for 5 school days and payment of \$20 is received (subject to a waiver for economic hardship), the electronic device will be returned to the parent/guardian.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: School will take and keep device for 10 school days. After the device is retained for 10 school days, the parent/guardian shall pay \$40, which represents the actual cost associated with the confiscation and storage of the device, subject to a waiver for economic hardship; and the student will receive a one-day school suspension. After the device is retained for 10 school days and payment of \$40 is received (subject to a waiver for economic hardship), the electronic device will be returned to the parent/guardian.

4<sup>th</sup> Offense: School will take and keep device for 20 school days. After the device is retained for 20 school days, the parent/guardian shall pay \$60, which represents the actual cost associated with the confiscation and storage of the device, subject to a waiver for economic hardship. Additionally, the student can be subject to further disciplinary consequences at the discretion of the building principal.

The school is not responsible for any loss of or damage to an electronic device confiscated by the school and stored according to the discipline policy.

### **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 student and/or staff
- 3-5 Extortion – use of intimidation, coercion or force
- \* 3-6 Cheating on tests or exams
- \*\*3-7 Vandalism of personal and/or school property
- 3-8 Using profane, obscene, indecent, immoral, or offensive language and/or gestures, and/or possession of obscene, indecent, immoral or offensive materials

## **Disciplinary Action:**

### First Violation

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

Maximum: School suspension (three days) and 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 disciplinary hearing

\* The grade “0” will be assigned regardless of other punishment.

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

### **Level IV**

\* 4-1 Possession, use or under the influence of alcohol, counterfeit drugs, illegal drugs, narcotics, controlled substance(s) or paraphernalia

4-2 Aggravated assault to a student

4-3 Assault on a school employee

4-4 Using profane, obscene, indecent, immoral, or offensive language and/or gestures directly to 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 Weapon(s) possession or use

\*\* 5-2 Sale or distribution, or conspiring to sell counterfeit drugs, illegal drugs/alcohol, narcotics or controlled substances

\*\* 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: Possession, other than gun – 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 DCAC)

\*Students below grade 6 may be given other punishment.

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

\*\***Maximum:** Expulsion

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.

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.**

### **Disciplinary Hearing**

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.

## **DeSoto County Schools Gang 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 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 the 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.

## DeSoto County Schools Bus Guidelines

### Find your Bus Online:

[www.desotocountyschools.org](http://www.desotocountyschools.org)

*Students may be picked up in the morning temporarily without a pass, but a bus pass with the minimum required information will be required before boarding in the afternoon.*

### **THE BUS WILL NOT DELIVER TO DAYCARES OR SITTERS.**

### **Safely Loading and Unloading a School Bus**

The most dangerous time for bus riders is during the loading and unloading process. Nationally, student fatalities in the danger zone around the bus (A) nearly triple the number from actual bus crashes.

### **Teach Your Child:**

- When getting on the bus, stay away from the danger zone and wait for the driver's signal. Board the bus one at a time.
- Look before stepping off the bus to be sure no cars are passing on the shoulder (side of the road). Move away from the bus.
- Before crossing the street, take five "giant steps" out from the front of the bus, or until driver's face can be seen (A).

**Wait for the driver to signal that it's safe to cross.**

- Look left/right-left when coming to the edge of the bus to make sure traffic is stopped.
- Keep watching traffic when crossing.

### **Safety Steps You Can Take:**

- Supervise children. Get to the bus stop on time. Wait away from the road and avoid rough play.
- Teach your child to ask the driver for help if he/she drops something near the bus.
- Have your child use a backpack or book bag to keep loose items together.
- Ensure clothing and backpacks have no loose drawstrings or straps that may get caught.
- Encourage safe school bus loading and unloading.
- If you think a bus stop is in an unusually dangerous place, talk with the transportation department (662-349-4210).

### **Set the Example:**

- Vehicles must stop when the bus displays flashing red warning lights and extends the stop signal arm (B). Vehicles may not pass until the flashing red lights and signals are turned off.

### **Bus Rules**

**Be waiting at your stop 5 minutes early.** (This does NOT mean inside your house.)

**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.**

### **OBEDIENCE TO THE BUS DRIVER!!**

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- **No unauthorized items on bus.** (No weapons, tobacco, combustibles, pets, large items, etc.)
- **Be nice and courteous.**
- **Keep the bus clean.**
- **No profanity and NO FIGHTING.**
- **Keep hands and head inside of bus.**
- **Do not throw anything, anywhere.**
- **Stay in your seat. Driver may assign seats.**
- **No eating or drinking.**
- **Damage to bus interior may result in student paying for the damage.**

- **Emergency door/windows may only be opened in case of emergency.**
- **Do not distract or bother the driver through loud talking or misbehavior.**
- **Report any problems you may have to the driver as soon as possible.**
- **DCS and drivers are not responsible for articles left on the bus.**

*NOTICE: Use or possession of gang graffiti, gang drawings, gang writings, gang dress or gang activity of any kind may result in expulsion from school.*

**VIOLATIONS WILL BE REPORTED TO YOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL.**

*Punishment may include removing you from the bus permanently.*

**SCHOOL PRINCIPALS WILL DETERMINE ANY PUNISHMENTS.**

**MS Code 37-41-3 Pupils Entitled to Transportation;** Pupils of legal school age, which shall include kindergarten pupils, and in actual attendance in the public schools who live a distance of one (1) mile or more by the nearest traveled road from the school to which they are assigned. Students not at their assigned stops in the morning, or have not properly boarded the bus on time at the school in the afternoon will be left.

A driver may only allow students to unload at their assigned stop, unless prior arrangements are made and approved by a school principal or administrator.

**Students may not have friends ride home without prior approval by a school administrator.** A request must be communicated in writing by the parent(s) of the student(s) involved, approved in writing and communicated clearly to the bus driver by the school.

## **Visitors (KM)**

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:

- All visitors must report to the office (including news media).
- If the principal has any reason to question the legitimacy of the visit, the superintendent's office shall be consulted.
- Teachers shall not be interrupted while teaching except for emergencies.

- Pupils from other schools and pre-school children are not allowed unless specifically invited and pre-arranged through the principal's office.
- News media must be granted permission by Community relations before they enter a school campus or they will be considered trespassing and are subject to fines and/or arrest.

## **Tobacco-Free School Property (EBAB)**

The DeSoto County Board of Education bans the use of all tobacco products in all school buildings and property in the district and in all school vehicles by all persons at all times.

This ban extends to all employees, students, and patrons attending school-sponsored athletic events and meetings and 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 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, 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).

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged for the success of your child. To arrange a conference with your child's teacher, counselor, or principal, please phone or email the school for an appointment. Conferences help both the home and school provide learning in terms of student maturity, ability, and achievement.

# Medications

Administration of medication is foremost the responsibility of the parent. The only medications that will be administered during the school day are those that are specifically ordered during that time. For safety reasons, schools are not responsible for keeping extra supplies of medication to give in case a dose is not given at home. The medication must either be given at home all the time or at school all the time.

Prescription medications must be brought to the school by a responsible adult. Medication will be counted and receipted with a school staff member. Prescription medication will only be accepted if it is in a pharmacy dispensed medication bottle with a current medication label that contains the student's name, name of the medication, how often it is to be given, the dosage, and the date of expiration. A completed medication authorization form, signed by the parent/guardian, is also required. These forms can be found online at [www.desotocountyschools.org](http://www.desotocountyschools.org) or your school website under "Required Forms". It is at the principal's discretion if over-the-counter medications will be given at school. If over-the-counter medications are allowed, they must be in the original bottle and/or package with the dosing instructions on it. A completed medication authorization form signed by the parent/guardian is also required.

For questions regarding medication administration, asthma medication, epi-pens, or diabetic medications, please refer to Board policies JGCDC, JGCDA, and JGCDE.

# School Lunches

Lunches are served each school day. Parents and visitors are encouraged to participate in the school lunch program. The DeSoto County School Board has adopted a Wellness Policy to encourage healthful eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life. Parents are encouraged to pay for meals in advance, either at the school or online at [www.mypaymentsplus.com](http://www.mypaymentsplus.com). This service can be used to post payments, view account balances, and receive email notification when balances are low.

Menus can be found on the website at [www.desotocountycn.org](http://www.desotocountycn.org). Menus meet all state and federal guidelines under the United States Department of Agriculture. Parents can apply for free or reduced lunches online at [www.schoollunchapp.com](http://www.schoollunchapp.com).

# Asbestos Management Plans

The DeSoto County School District has Asbestos management plans for each school in accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act. The management plan can be reviewed in the main office of the school. Any questions may be directed to DeSoto County Board of Education, Bill Dahl at 662-449-7262

## Inclement Weather

DeSoto County Schools will make an official announcement regarding closures/delays on the district website, [www.desotocountyschools.org](http://www.desotocountyschools.org), on Memphis-area television stations, and through the 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). Days missed due to inclement weather will be rescheduled. State law requires school to be in session for 180 days.

## Emergency Management

*Dear Parents,*

*We are prepared to respond should an emergency or crisis arise while school is in session. Our first priority is to protect the students and staff from harm. Each school has a detailed plan. Staff members are assigned specific tasks in the event of fire, tornado, earthquake, hazardous materials, physical threats and more. Parents should have a basic understanding of our plans and procedures; however, some sensitive details may not be published.*

### **Parent/Guardian Responsibilities in Emergency Preparation and Response**

Parents and legal guardians of students are responsible for ensuring that current emergency contact information is provided to the school. **Students are ONLY allowed to be released to persons *designated in writing* at such time designated by school administration.**

In addition to school personnel, the parents and guardians are also responsible for informing their children about how to respond in case of an emergency, disaster, or event. Specifically, parents should instruct their children regarding

the importance of complying with the direction of school personnel and emergency responders. *(It is critical that students do not have directions from parents/guardians that are contrary to the district's stated policy or contrary to directions from school personnel on the scene of an incident. Compliance and cooperation are essential.)*

School authorities will do everything possible to care for each student while he/she is under district supervision. An emergency, lockdown, building evacuation or some combination of all three may occur during school hours.

## **Please remember these simple “Dos and Don’ts.”**

### **Do**

**Do keep your contact information updated.** *In the event of a serious incident the school and district will make every effort to openly communicate the releasable information to all parents by multiple means (phone, e-mail, text, news media, etc.).*

**Do keep your child’s medical, medication and allergy information updated.**

**Do familiarize yourself with school emergency procedures and required drills.** *The DCS Safety Plan is available ([www.desotocountyschools.org](http://www.desotocountyschools.org)), updated annually, and includes countywide crisis response procedures. Each school is assessed annually and also updates a site-specific addendum each year.*

**Do tune to news media for emergency instructions.**

**Do check the DCS or school web pages for updates.**

**Do sign up for “Notify Me” automated emails or texts.** *Follow us on twitter or like us on Facebook.*

**Do follow emergency instructions carefully.** *Lockdowns and evacuations may require changes and delays in student checkout and pick-up procedures.*

**Do expect to provide proper identification if picking up your child.** *Students may or may not be available for immediate pick-up. Times and locations of parent pick-up may change.*

**Do remain calm and patient.** *Caring for any injured and protecting students and staff will be the district's first priority; then contacting parents/guardians of any hurt individuals. Therefore, some mass communications may be delayed.*

## Don't

**Don't assume the worst.** *School lockdowns can be sounded for many reasons, such as precautionary measures while rumors are being checked out, or for the duration of a police action in the neighborhood totally unrelated to the school operations.*

**Don't drive to the school unless you're directed to do so.** *Anyone arriving on campus during a crisis should expect traffic patterns and parking to be different.*

**Don't call the school immediately.** *During a building evacuation phones are unattended, and during other events the school phone lines and staff can be overwhelmed with parent calls. Phone lines need to be cleared in order to deal with the situation.*

**Don't call/text your child.** *Exchanging incomplete, incorrect information or intentionally restricted and sensitive information can make a situation worse.*

**Don't wait until there is a crisis to get involved.** *PTA/PTOs and Booster Clubs are great ways to get plugged in early and stay in the loop all year at your child's school.*

## **DeSoto County Schools Dress Code (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:
  - a. Substances or activities illegal by law for minors, such as, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, gambling
  - b. Profane, suggestive or violent language
  - c. 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 shorts 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' uniform 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 to the discretion of the principal.
18. Local principals or their designee have the power and discretion to make all decisions on their campus.

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The DeSoto County School District will not, except for “directory information,” disclose personally identifiable information from the education records of a student without the prior written consent from the parent or the eligible student. Prior consent of the parent or eligible student is required when the school releases such information to other school officials (including teachers), officials of another school district in which the student seeks to enroll, or other federal, state and educational agencies as enumerated in Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).

The schools in the District will, upon occasion, use/publish personally identifiable information including honor rolls, school annuals, athletic rosters, class rolls and school-sponsored club and activity rosters. Parents who wish their children to be excluded from this practice must advise, in writing, the principal of the school no later than fourteen (14) days after the student's enrollment or receipt of this notice, whichever is later. Appeals of the decisions rendered by school principals regarding educational records may be made to the Superintendent of DeSoto County Schools or his designee.

**“Directory information”** means information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

- a) Directory information includes, but is not limited to, the student’s name; address; telephone listing; electronic mail address; photograph; date and place of birth; major field of student; grade level; enrollment status (e.g., undergraduate or graduate, full-time or part-time); dates of attendance; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; degrees, honors and awards received; and the most recent educational agency or institution attended.
- b) Directory information does not include a student’s
  1. Social security number; or
  2. Student identification (ID) number, except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section.
- c) Directory information includes a student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used by the student for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems, but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticates the user’s identity, such as a personal identification number (PIN), password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

FERPA affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records.

These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s educational records within 45 days of the day the school district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Superintendent or designee a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Superintendent or designee will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s educational records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the Superintendent or designee, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the District decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the District

will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the DeSoto County School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605.

## **Media Release Information**

The DeSoto County School District designates the following items as Directory Information: student name, address, telephone number, date of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, most recent school attended, photograph and videotape not used in a disciplinary matter, and student work displayed at the discretion of the teacher. The District may disclose any of these items without prior written consent, unless an "Opt-Out Form" is completed and returned to the school. This form is available at your child's school. *If a parent "opts-out," the child's photo will not be in the yearbook as this is considered "directory information."*

# **Anti-Harassment Policy (JCBC)**

Students in the DeSoto County School District are to be protected from sexual harassment. This protection includes any combination of relationships including student to student, staff member or teacher to student or harassment from any adult or other student. It is the intent of the DeSoto County Board of Education to maintain an environment free from sexual harassment of any kind. Therefore, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature amounting to or constituting harassment are prohibited.

The DeSoto County School District also affirms the concept of employee protection and therefore shall not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee, male or female, which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.

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. Sexual harassment is inappropriate behavior and is offensive. Any student who engages in the sexual harassment of anyone in the school setting may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Any employee of the DeSoto County School District who has any inappropriate sexual behavior will not only be subject to punitive measures up to and including termination, but also subject to prosecution in accordance with Mississippi Codes § 97-5-24 (1994) and § 97-29-3 (1980).

## **Equipment/Internet Responsibility Statement (IJB)**

DeSoto County School District is pleased to offer students access to computer usage to enhance academic development and skills in using media that are commonly found in all aspects of our daily lives. DeSoto County Schools (DCS) is CIPA (Child Internet Protection Act) and COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) compliant. Recognizing that no filtering solution can be 100% effective, it is understood that all technology protection measures do not and will not work perfectly. In complying with CIPA, DCS is expected to engage in a "good faith effort" to abide by the requirements of CIPA/FERPA. CIPA/FERPA does not create a private right to action, meaning that the

discovery of objectionable material on a computer cannot result in a lawsuit complaining that a school violated CIPA/FERPA.

Due to the fragile nature of the equipment being used and the nature of much of the material available over the Internet, a “Student Technology Acceptable Use Policy” form (available at your child’s school) must be signed by you and your child before use of the equipment will be allowed. The use of the Internet is a PRIVILEGE, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in cancellation of those privileges and/or disciplinary action. The administrator of the school and/or the school technology committee will determine if an action is inappropriate use and their decision is final. This is a legal and binding document.

**DeSoto County Schools**  
**BYOD Pilot Program**  
**FAQs**

FAQs	Answers
What if my child's device is stolen or damaged? What recourse can I take?	Students bring electronic communication devices to school at their own risk, just like any other personal item. The school will not be held responsible if an electronic device or other item is lost, stolen or misplaced, nor are they responsible for any damage done to the device while at school. Some devices have a device locator; it is recommended that you enable this feature if possible. Any time a theft occurs, you should contact the SRO (School Resource Officer) to make him/her aware of the offense. Bringing devices to school can be useful; however, some risks are involved as well. It is always a good idea to record the device serial number to have in case of theft.
Is it required that my child use the School wireless? Can they use their own 3G or 4G service?	Students with a personally owned device are required to use the guest wireless network.
My child is bringing a device to school for instructional purposes. Will they have access to the things they normally do with district equipment?	Your child will have access to any of the web-based software the schools currently use (databases, library search tools, etc.) Software may run differently on different devices for varying reasons.
How will my son's/daughter's device be used in the classroom?	Schools must challenge students with rigorous, personalized academic learning experiences that foster innovation and creativity. Students will engage in a cohesively integrated curriculum, access information, and apply it to solve authentic problems in a collaborative manner.
I don't have my own electronic communication device to bring to school. Will I be penalized or miss out on instruction?	No, it is not mandatory for students to bring a device, even if they do own one. Use of personal electronic devices will be optional. Keep in mind that learning can be enhanced greatly for the entire class even if only a handful of students have a device.
Can my child charge the device at school?	<b>No, devices should be fully charged before bringing them to school. The ideal device would allow student to access the internet and have a battery life that would last throughout the school day.</b>
Why am I filtered on my own computer? Shouldn't I be able to see what I want to on my own device?	Internet filtering is a requirement of all public schools. The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requires all network access to be filtered regardless of the device you use to access it while in a public school. You own your device, but the network you're using belongs to the school and Internet access will be filtered.
Am I still held accountable for the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) I signed at the beginning of the school year even though this is my personal device?	Yes, students using a personally owned device must have both the Acceptable Use Policy and the Device User Agreement signed.
As a parent am I required to have antivirus software on my child's device?	All notebooks, netbooks and Mac Books must have antivirus software installed with updates activated. Streaming of any audio or video must be reserved for classroom activities only. Cloud-based music and videos personally owned by the student are not allowed.
Will tech support be provided for student owned devices?	Tech support will not be provided for student-owned devices. It is not the responsibility of the teacher or staff to troubleshoot individual devices during the school day.
I have my device with me in class. How do I get on the Internet now?	Most devices will detect a wireless connection when you are near one. Most of the time devices will ask you if you would like to join the network when prompted. Choose guest from the list.

# DeSoto County Non-discriminatory Policy

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 Director  
Office of General Counsel  
DeSoto County Schools  
5 East South Street  
Hernando, MS 38632  
662-429-5271

Director of Federal Programs  
Title IX Coordinator  
DeSoto County Schools  
5 East South Street  
Hernando, MS 38632  
662-429-5271

The Compliance Director has been designated to address all inquiries regarding the following Federal polices:

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: Complaints, Grievances and Harrassment.

# **City of Southaven Ordinance**

Please be advised of the City of Southaven Ordinance, City Code 10-8. This ordinance states: If a parent/guardian gives false statements about his/her residence to a government official to enroll children in a Southaven public school, the parent/guardian can be fined up to \$1,000 and/or jailed for a period of not more than six (6) months or both. In addition, restitution shall be made to the City of Southaven for all man-hours exhausted and expenses occurred due to such false statements or misrepresentations.

The schools covered by this ordinance are all schools within the city limits of Southaven. They are: Southaven Elementary, Greenbrook Elementary, Hope Sullivan Elementary, Southaven Intermediate School, Southaven Middle School, Southaven High School, DeSoto Central Primary, DeSoto Central Elementary, DeSoto Central Middle School, and DeSoto Central High School. Please be aware that this ordinance includes families who live out of the city limits of Southaven, but are assigned to any of the above named schools.

In addition to parents who falsify information, this ordinance is also directed at DeSoto County residents who knowingly allow their address to be used by families who live out of the district. This practice contributes to the burden local taxpayers are paying, in addition to the cost of constructing new facilities to accommodate our growing number of students.

# DeSoto County Elementary and Intermediate Schools

Center Hill Elementary  
13662 Center Hill Road  
Olive Branch, MS 38654

890-7705 (Grades K-5)  
Principal - Leslie Heyman  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/che](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/che)

Chickasaw Elementary School  
6391 Chickasaw Drive  
Olive Branch, MS 38654

895-6664 (Grades 2-3)  
Principal - Selina Hall  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/ces](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/ces)

DeSoto Central Primary School  
3210 Getwell Road  
Southaven, MS 38672

912-1300 (Grades K-2)  
Principal - Colleen Long  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/dcps](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/dcps)

DeSoto Central Elementary  
2411 Central Parkway  
Southaven, MS 38672

349-6234 (Grades 3-5)  
Principal - Lisa Nye  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/dce](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/dce)

Greenbrook Elementary School  
730 Rasco Road  
Southaven, MS 38671

342-2330 (Grades K-2)  
Principal - Melynda Crockett  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/ges](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/ges)

Hernando Elementary School  
455 Riley Street  
Hernando, MS 38632

429-4160 (Grades K-1)  
Principal - Renee Triplett  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/hes](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/hes)

Hernando Hills Elementary School  
570 McIngvale Road  
Hernando, MS 38632

429-9117 (Grades 2-3)  
Principal - Stephanie Gilder  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/hhe](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/hhe)

Hope Sullivan Elementary School  
7985 Southaven Circle West  
Southaven, MS 38671

393-2919 (Grades K-2)  
Principal - Bettye Magee  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/hse](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/hse)

Horn Lake Elementary School 6341 Ridgewood Drive Horn Lake, MS 38637	393-4608 (Grades K-2) Principal - Cynthia Dunning <a href="http://www.desotocountyschools.org/hle">www.desotocountyschools.org/hle</a>
Horn Lake Intermediate School 6585 Horn Lake Road Horn Lake, MS 38637	280-7075 (Grades 3-5) Principal –Rosie King <a href="http://www.desotocountyschools.org/hli">www.desotocountyschools.org/hli</a>
Lake Cormorant Elementary School 3285 Wilson Mill Rd. West Lake Cormorant, MS 38641	781-1135 (Grades K-5) Principal - Dr. Margaret Boyd <a href="http://www.desotocountyschools.org/lce">www.desotocountyschools.org/lce</a>
Lewisburg Elementary School 1717 Craft Road Olive Branch, MS 38654	895-8750 (Grades 3-5) Principal - Amanda Samples <a href="http://www.desotocountyschools.org/les">www.desotocountyschools.org/les</a>
Lewisburg Primary School 1707 Craft Road Olive Branch, MS 38654	893-6001 (Grades K-2) Principal - Jeannie Treadway <a href="http://www.desotocountyschools.org/lps">www.desotocountyschools.org/lps</a>
Oak Grove Central Elementary 893 Oak Grove Road Hernando, MS 38632	429-4180 (Grades 4-5) Principal - Lisa Steiner <a href="http://www.desotocountyschools.org/oge">www.desotocountyschools.org/oge</a>
Olive Branch Elementary School 9549 East Pigeon Roost Road Olive Branch, MS 38654	895-2256 (Grades K-1) Principal - Sunnie Barkley <a href="http://www.desotocountyschools.org/obe">www.desotocountyschools.org/obe</a>
Olive Branch Intermediate School 8631 Pigeon Roost Road Olive Branch, MS 38654	893-1221 (Grades 4-5) Principal - Claudette Smith <a href="http://www.desotocountyschools.org/obi">www.desotocountyschools.org/obi</a>
Overpark Elementary School 8530 Forest Hill Irene Road Olive Branch, MS 38654	890-8745 (Grades K-5) Principal - Lisa Love <a href="http://www.desotocountyschools.org/oes">www.desotocountyschools.org/oes</a>

Pleasant Hill Elementary School  
7686 Pleasant Hill Road  
Olive Branch, MS 38654

890-9654 (Grades K-5)  
Principal - Jamie Loper  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/phe](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/phe)

Shadow Oaks Elementary School  
3780 Shadow Oaks Parkway  
Horn Lake, MS 38637

393-4585 (Grades K-2)  
Principal - Traci Suiter-Riley  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/soe](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/soe)

Southaven Elementary School  
8274 Claiborne Street  
Southaven, MS 38671

342-2289 (Grades K-5)  
Principal – Christy Johnston  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/ses](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/ses)

Southaven Intermediate School  
175 Rasco Rd. West  
Southaven, MS 38671

253-0123 (Grades 3-5)  
Principal - Bryon Williams  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/sis](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/sis)

Walls Elementary School  
6131 Delta View Road  
Walls, MS 38680

781-1280 (Grades K-5)  
Principal – Elisa Goss  
[www.desotocountyschools.org/wes](http://www.desotocountyschools.org/wes)

# DeSoto County Schools 2016 - 2017 Calendar

August 1	Teachers' 1 <sup>st</sup> Day (Monday)
August 3	Students' 1 <sup>st</sup> Day (Wednesday)
September 5	Labor Day
October 10	Columbus Day Holiday
November 8	Professional Development
November 21-25	Thanksgiving Holidays
December 19-January 2	Christmas Holidays
January 3	Teachers and Students Return
January 16	King/Lee Day
February 17	Professional Development
February 20	Washington's Birthday
March 13-17	Spring Break
April 14	Good Friday
April 17	Easter
May 22	Students' Last Day (Friday)
May 25	Teachers' Last Day (Wednesday)

*\*December 19, February 17, February 20, April 17, May 23, and May 24 are scheduled makeup days.*

**State law requires a student schedule of 180 days. School calendar is subject to change due to emergency conditions.**

# NOTES

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**THE DESOTO COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT DOES NOT  
DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, GENDER,  
RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, AGE OR DISABILITY  
AND IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER.**

**Contact DeSoto County Schools  
at  
[www.desotocountyschools.org](http://www.desotocountyschools.org)**