

Elementary Schools

2019-20

***PARENT AND STUDENT
HANDBOOK***

**CHOCTAW
TRIBAL SCHOOLS**

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

Adopted by MBCI Tribal Council Resolution on 5/30/2019

You can find us on the internet at
www.choctawtribalschools.com

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

Cyrus Ben, Tribal Chief

Choctaw Tribal Council

Bogue Chitto

Roderick Bell
Ronnie Henry, Sr.
Kendall Wallace

Pearl River

**Deborah Martin
Barry McMillan
Nigel Gibson

Bogue Homa

Michael Briscoe

Red Water

Richard Isaac
Sharon Johnson

Crystal Ridge

Christopher Eaves

Standing Pine

Loriann Ahshapanek
Richard Sockey

Conehatta

Timothy Thomas, Sr.
Tarina Anderson
Hilda Nickey

Tucker

Wilma Simpson-McMillan
Dorothy Wilson

**Chairperson of the Tribal Education Committee on Education

This handbook was designed as a guide to the school policies and procedures of our school district and particularly for the elementary schools of the Choctaw Tribal Schools. We encourage you to sign up for the parent portal, alert notification system and check out our social media pages to stay informed of school events. We also encourage you to email your child's teacher as needed. We hope you will utilize all of the communication pieces offered as we work to increase two-way communication with parents. Our goal is to keep parents informed and involved in our partnership to provide the best educational experience possible for your children. We are looking forward to another wonderful year.

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Choctaw Tribal Schools
P. O. Box 6008
122 Division of Schools Drive, Choctaw, MS 39350
Phone 601-650-7302 FAX 601-656-9454
David Germany, Director, Department of Schools

Bogue Chitto Elementary School
13241 Highway 491 North
Philadelphia, MS 39350
Phone 601-389-1000 Fax 389-1002
Principal: Acting, Nell Adkins
nell.adkins@choctawtribalschools.com

Standing Pine Elementary School
538 Highway 487 East
Carthage, MS 39051
Phone 601-267-9225 Fax 267-9129
Principal: Linda Peoples
linda.peoples@choctawtribalschools.com

Conehatta Elementary School
851 Tushka Drive
Conehatta, MS 39057
Phone 601-775-8254 Fax 775-9229
Principal: Brian Parkman
brian.parkman@choctawtribalschools.com

Tucker Elementary School
126 East Tucker Circle
Philadelphia, MS 39350
Phone 601-656-8775 Fax 656-9341
Principal: Gene Cliburn
gene.cliburn@choctawtribalschools.com

Pearl River Elementary School
470 Industrial Road
Choctaw, MS 39350
Phone 601-656-9051 Fax 656-9054
Principal: Suzanne Hyatt
suzanne.hyatt@choctawtribalschools.com

Choctaw Central Middle School
150 Recreation Road
Choctaw, MS 39350
Phone 601-663-7777 Fax 656-1558
Principal: Bruce Burns
bruce.burns@choctawtribalschools.com

Red Water Elementary School
107 Braves Blvd.
Carthage, MS 39051
Phone 601-267-8500 Fax 267-1606
Principal: Billy Mack Wilbanks
billy.wilbanks@choctawtribalschools.com

Choctaw Central High School
150 Recreation Road
Choctaw, MS 39350
Phone 601-663-7777 Fax 663-7776
Principal: Fred Hickmon
fred.hickmon@choctawtribalschools.com

Choctaw Career Technical Education Center
404 Industrial Road, Suite 2
Choctaw, MS 39350
Phone 601-663-7801 Fax 663-7840
CCHS Asst. Principal: Liddia Hughes
liddia.hughes@choctawtribalschools.com

Choctaw Virtual Learning Center
390 Industrial Road
Choctaw, MS 39350
Phone 601-663-7928
Administrator: Lari York
lari.york@choctawtribalschools.com

Organizational Statement and Directory

The administrative head of the Choctaw Tribal School System is the Tribal Chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. The Tribal Council, particularly through the Committee on Education, determines policy for the Department of Schools and empowers the Director of Education and the Director of Schools to execute policy and provide leadership and management for the school system. Annually, the Choctaw Tribal School System requests accreditation from the Mississippi Department of Education as a nonpublic school. The Department of Schools maintains a strong support office to provide technical coordination of all school services. Each local school is led by a Principal who handles the day-to-day supervision of all facets of local school operation. At each school, the Local Advisory Committee On Schools (LACOS) serves as a committee of parents/guardians and interested community members who meet with the local school administration in an advisory capacity for the hiring of school employees and the discussion of all aspects of the school program.

Director of Education	601-650-1596
Director of Schools	650-7302
Department of Schools	650-7302
School Business Office	650-7302
Exceptional Education Office	663-7643
District Registrar's Office	650-7371/650-7322
District Food Services Office	663-7863
District Maintenance Office	656-6612
District Transportation Office.....	650-9211
Dormitory	650-7311
Parent/Education Center	656-5724
Bogue Chitto Elementary	389-1000
Conehatta Elementary.....	775-8254
Pearl River Elementary	656-9051
Red Water Elementary	267-8500
Standing Pine Elementary.....	267-9225
Tucker Elementary	656-8775
NASA Teacher Enhancement Center.....	663-7771
Choctaw Central Middle School.....	663-7777
Choctaw Central High School	663-7777
Choctaw Career Technical Center	663-7802
Choctaw Alternative Education Center	663-7777
Tribal Office	656-5251
Tribal Insurance Office	650-1579

OUR MOTTO, VISION AND GOALS

Our Motto

Alla Momat Ikkana Chih
(All Children Will Learn)

Our Vision

In the pursuit of excellence and believing that Alla momat ikkana chih, all children will learn, Choctaw Tribal Schools strive to provide a healthy, safe, community-based, culturally relevant and inspiring learning environment for Native American learners.

Our Purpose

The Choctaw Tribal School System, in partnership with the families and communities, will educate and inspire all students to become responsible, contributing citizens of their local and global community.

Our Goals

- Increase the rigor of the curriculum and assessment system and the use of technology
- Raise achievement levels for all students and close the gap between district and national achievement levels
- Provide early learning experiences that increase opportunities for students to succeed academically, socially and emotionally
- Develop cultural pride and knowledge of Choctaw language and cultural heritage
- Reduce dropout rate and increase the graduation rate
- Maintain a school campus where students are safe and parents feel welcomed, informed, and involved

Believing all children will learn, we commit to . . .

- Creating an educational environment that will challenge, inspire and excite students
- Preparing all students to reach their fullest potential
- Creating a positive school climate that is fostered by caring individuals who model respect and set high expectations for students
- Providing instruction and activities for development of mental, physical, social, and emotional well-being of students.

HISTORY

The Choctaw Indian Reservation consists of 35,000 acres of trust land scattered over seven counties in east central Mississippi. The over 11,000 members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians live in the eight reservation communities of Bogue Chitto, Bogue Homa, Conehatta, Crystal Ridge, Pearl River (the site of tribal headquarters, the industrial park, Pearl River Resort, the health center/hospital, and other tribal services), Red Water, Standing Pine, and Tucker.

Members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians are descendants of the proud Choctaw individuals who refused to be removed to Oklahoma in the 1830's. For nearly 150 years, most Mississippi Choctaws lived in isolation and poverty with little or no access to education. No schools at all existed for Choctaw students prior to the 1920's and 1930's, when the Bureau of Indian Affairs built elementary schools. Choctaw Central High School was constructed in 1963. Before that time, segregation prohibited attendance by Choctaw students in either the black or white Mississippi public schools. Choctaw students who wished to attend high school had to attend federal boarding schools in North Carolina, Oklahoma, or Kansas. Few did so. Most tribal members worked as sharecroppers or agricultural laborers and were only seasonally employed. Virtually all tribal business was managed by Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service officials.

In the mid-1960's, the tribe determined to improve its circumstances and began to work toward economic and governmental independence. Tribal leadership provided by the Tribal Chief and the seventeen-member Tribal Council (representatives elected from each of the Choctaw communities) has enabled the establishment of a centralized system of self-government that provides comprehensive health, education, social, law enforcement, courts, housing, and economic development services.

In the 1980's the U.S. Congress passed two significant laws that opened the door for the Tribe to take control of its own educational programs – the Indian Self-Determination Act (PL 93-638) and the Tribally Controlled Schools Act (PL 100-297). In 1988, with the Choctaw Tribal Council as the official school board, the Tribe contracted from the Bureau of Indian Affairs all operations of the tribal schools and today continues to administer the schools as a BIA grant-funded school system, the largest unified reservation school system in the country – six elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. The school system reports administratively to the South and Eastern States Education Office of the Bureau of Indian Education in Nashville, Tennessee, and to the office of the BIE Director in Washington, D.C. The Bureau of Indian Education is considered a “state” education agency by the U.S. Department of Education. The Choctaw Tribal Schools must fully comply with all federal requirements for No Child Left Behind, special education, and other federal programs. As Bureau of Indian Education funded schools, enrollment in the Tribal Schools is limited to students who hold a BIA Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood of at least one-quarter.

Halitoh!

Holissoh ápisa ilappak falamat hash áyalaká yakókih oklilah. Hapi náyoppah okle chipesakat.

Chahta Immi hicha Chahta annopa átokma okchalichih bannat oklah kil atoksalechi.

Hello!

We say thank you for choosing to come back to this school. We are happy to see you. Let us work on keeping our Choctaw culture and Choctaw language alive.

We are the schools of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and we are deeply proud of the unique heritage that is ours. Our schools are important places for learning about grammar, reading, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and sportsmanship. They are also very important places for learning about the Choctaw language and culture. We hope that every person associated with the Choctaw Tribal School System – students and staff, tribal members and non-tribal members – will all learn together about our rich Choctaw past, our vibrant Choctaw present, and our bright and shining Choctaw future!

The following is the “Pledge of Allegiance” in the Choctaw language:

United States of America ĭ shapha hicha im áyalhtoka yá im áyalhilih,
Ná miya yakómika qhikíyah átoko,
Yakni moyyót Chihówa ĭnotákah,
Itti filammichi iksho,
Oklah moyyóma kat yoka kiyoh,
Hicha ná ittim áyalhpisáchih.

(We thank the Choctaw Language Program for providing these Choctaw translations.)

Choctaw Tribal Schools
 2019-2020 School Calendar
 210 Contract Period – August 5, 2019 – May 22, 2020

First Semester (91 instructional days)	Second Semester (90 instructional days)
Aug. 5-6 – Staff Work Days District Mtg.	Jan. 6 – Begin 3 rd Term
Aug. 7 – Students’ First Day	Jan. 20 – ML King Holiday
Aug. 9 – Nanih Waiya Day Holiday	Feb. 6 – 3 rd Term Progress Reports
Sept. 2 – Labor Day Holiday	Feb. 17 – Presidents Day Holiday
Sept. 11 – 1 st Term Progress Reports	Mar. 6 – End 3 rd Term (43 days)
Sept. 27 – American Indian Day Holiday	Mar. 9-13 – Spring Holidays
Oct. 11 – End 1 st Term (45 days)	Mar. 16 – Begin 4 th Term
Oct. 14 – Begin 2 nd Term	Apr. 10-13 – Easter Holidays
Nov. 11 – Veterans Day Holiday	Apr. 16 – 4 th Term Progress Reports
Nov. 14 – 2 nd Term Progress Reports	May 21 – End 4 th Term (47 days)
Nov. 27-29 – Thanksgiving Holidays	May 22 – Staff Work Day
Dec. 20 – End 2 nd Term (46 days)	
Dec. 23-Jan. 3- Christmas/New Year Holiday	

11	Federal/ Tribal Holidays
15	School Holidays
3	Staff Work Days / Professional Development
181	Student Instructional Days
210	Total Contract Days

Staff Work Days – 60% Days for Students	
Aug 28	Feb 26
Sept 25	Mar 25
Oct 30	May 21
Dec 20	

A. STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Eligibility for Enrollment

To be eligible to enroll in the Choctaw Tribal Schools (CTS) a student must be at least ¼ degree of Indian blood as verified by a valid Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood. Students who do not meet this requirement may receive a provisional enrollment status only after approval through the tribal education committee. Students who do not meet the enrollment eligibility requirements should not be enrolled but referred to the District Registrar to file for permission for the provisional enrollment. Any student who has faced an expulsion or suspension in another school district must complete the expulsion and/or suspension before they will be allowed to enter the Choctaw Tribal School System.

According to BIE ISEP regulations, no student who has reached his or her twenty-first birthday may enroll or re-enroll in any programs at Choctaw Central High School. However, a student who has enrolled before his or her twenty-first birthday and remains continuously enrolled, may continue completion of the program until his or her twenty-third birthday.

Attendance Boundaries

Choctaw parents or guardians who work at a tribal school in a community other than the one in which they reside may enroll their eligible child/children in either the school in which they work or the school in their community of residence.

Any other request to enroll children in a tribal school which is not in their community of residence must have **prior** approval from the Tribal Chief. Parents must submit a letter to the Registrar requesting a waiver and must state the reason for the request. The Registrar will be responsible for acquiring all the necessary signatures. Students are not allowed to enroll in or attend an out-of-boundary school until approval is obtained.

Approved requests remain valid until the end of the school year for which approval was requested.

Parents may only request approval for the current school year. Requests for the following school year may be made during the summer break. Approval will be revoked if the child enrolls in another school. Parents or guardians of out of boundary students must notify the registrar of any address changes during the school year.

Out-of- Boundary Bus Routes **Out of boundary students are not guaranteed transportation services.** Students assigned to a special out-of- boundary bus route must be approved and the student must ride daily or notify the school and/or driver when they will not ride in order to receive continued transportation services. Agreements between the school and parents may have to be signed.

Terms of Student Enrollment

Any parent/guardian enrolling a student into the Choctaw Tribal School system agrees to items listed below, unless a letter is submitted to the school principal to opt out of the following conditions or programs:

1. Enrollment in Choctaw Language Class for maintenance and/or language restoration and enhancement for all students grades Pre-Kindergarten through 10th grade (Grades 11-12 optional).
2. Publication of student photographs, work samples, information and student names in tribal publications or local newspapers.
3. Presentation of student photographs and work samples for educational conferences, workshops, classes, etc. that promote the school or district, with no use of student names.
4. Publication of student photographs on school and district websites and on official CTS

social media. Neither student names nor photographs of individual students will be published online by Choctaw Tribal Schools.

5. Participation in health education pertaining to pregnancy prevention and sexually transmitted diseases.

Enrollment Packet

The student Enrollment Packet is an important source of information for the school office. A newly completed packet is required **each year** for each child in attendance. Newly completed enrollment packets must be completed and turned in to the school within ten (10) days of the school year beginning. Students without completed registration packets will be dropped from school rolls and parents/guardians will be required to report to the school to complete enrollment forms before a child will be allowed back in school. Enrollment documents are available each year prior to the start of the school year. **Please inform the office of any changes in student information throughout the year, most importantly changes in work and emergency phone numbers.**

New Students

Enrollment information can be obtained from the school counselor or registrar's office. The following documents must be on file when a student enrolls in school:

- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card, or a completed application for a Social Security Identification Card
- Immunization Health Compliance Form * Including 7th graders Tdap vaccination
- Indian Student Eligibility Certification Form (CDIB)
- Notarized letter of custody (if you are enrolling a child for whom you are not listed on the birth certificate) or court document
- Withdrawal Form and Grades from Previous School (if transfer student)
- Student Enrollment Application Form
- USDA application for free and reduced meals
- Privacy Act Information
- Parent/Student Agreement Form (In the back of this Handbook)
- After School Application Form, if applicable
- Pre-Kindergarten Only: An official withdrawal form from Day Care and Head Start programs administered by the Division of Early Childhood Education.

Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Program Enrollment

Students are formally enrolled in the Pre-Kindergarten program based on the date that all required documentation is on file for the child. (See New Student Enrollment Information). Parents are encouraged to enroll their child in the Pre-Kindergarten program. A waiting list will be maintained at the school if the classes should fill up. Parents should let the school counselor at their school know their intentions of enrolling their child in the program beginning on May 1st of each previous school year. Parents on the waiting list will then be notified of openings. Parents are reminded that upon enrollment in Pre-K, students fall under the compulsory attendance requirements for all other students in the Choctaw Tribal Schools. Accreditation standards limit Pre-K class size to no more than 20 students.

Transfer Students

A student who transfers from one school to another must do the following:

- Have parents or guardians fill out an official withdrawal form in the school counselor's office.
- Turn in all books.
- Pay any fines or damage costs.
- Complete necessary enrollment documents
- Notarized letter of custody (a guardian not listed on the birth certificate) or a court document.
- Withdrawal Form and Grades from Previous School.
- Notify school transportation of the change so that bus service can be arranged.

Transfer of Records

When a student transfers to the Choctaw Tribal School System, a letter will be sent to the former school requesting his or her cumulative folder or other records. All fines and/or damage fees must be paid, and all textbooks and library books must be returned prior to withdrawing. A school is not permitted to hold a student's record for any reason. When a student withdraws to attend a school outside the tribal school district, the cumulative folder will be forwarded to the District Registrar who will handle transfer of records. All exceptional education records will be forwarded by special education and gifted staff.

Grade Placement Policy

When transferring from a graded school, students will be placed in the grade in which they are currently enrolled with all grades, attendance and mastery sheets being sent by their previous school to verify competencies mastered. Grades should be added to the teachers' grade book as soon as the student transfers. When a student transfers into the Choctaw Tribal School System from an un-graded program, an unaccredited program, or a home-school program, it is the school system's responsibility to ensure that the student's grade-level placement is consistent with the student's educational achievement. In grades K-8, the counselor at the local school, in coordination with the school principal, will administer a standardized placement test to the student. The counselor and the principal will consider test results, work samples the student or the student's family may provide, and an interview with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine appropriate K-8 grade-level placement.

Bus Policy

It is the policy of the Choctaw Tribal Schools to provide safe and reliable transportation to school each day. Daily bus absentee reports will be maintained at each school. Working with parents, the school strives to ensure that students are picked up and dropped off in a safe manner. Transportation on school buses is a privilege offered to students. Out of boundary students are not guaranteed transportation services to tribal schools. Students who ride the school bus are under the authority of the Choctaw Tribal Schools Transportation Department and their respective schools. Parents and students are expected to know and abide by the Transportation Regulations and Safety Procedures. (See Behavior Expectations).

Bus Route Changes (pick up & drop off location)

For the safety of all of our students, it is the policy of the tribal schools to limit changes to transportation unless there is clear written communication and verification made by school staff. Parents should send a note to the school if they need to make changes to their child's regular bus transportation routine. This note should include a phone number where you can be reached. In rare cases parents may phone the office, before 12:30 p.m., to notify the school of a change of transportation request. **Notifications after 12:30 p.m. will not be accepted** unless it is an extreme and rare emergency and is approved by the principal. Parents are responsible for having someone at the drop off/home location to meet their child(ren).

B. ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance in school is vital to your child's progress. The hands-on experiences and group discussions that are missed cannot be made up, making consistent, regular attendance imperative to a successful school experience for your child. It is also important to school funding which is based on average daily attendance. **In an effort to communicate with parents, the school will send an automated call each morning notifying parents when their child has been marked absent for unknown or unexcused reasons.**

We strongly encourage you to schedule medical and dental appointments during school vacations or after school hours when possible. If this is a problem, please attempt to schedule appointments so your child can attend a majority portion of the school day. The Choctaw Tribal School System and the Mississippi Activities Association requires that students participating in extracurricular activities, such as sports, band, cheerleading, Spring Festivals, and other school activities, must attend classes on the day of the activity.

Compulsory Attendance and Truancy

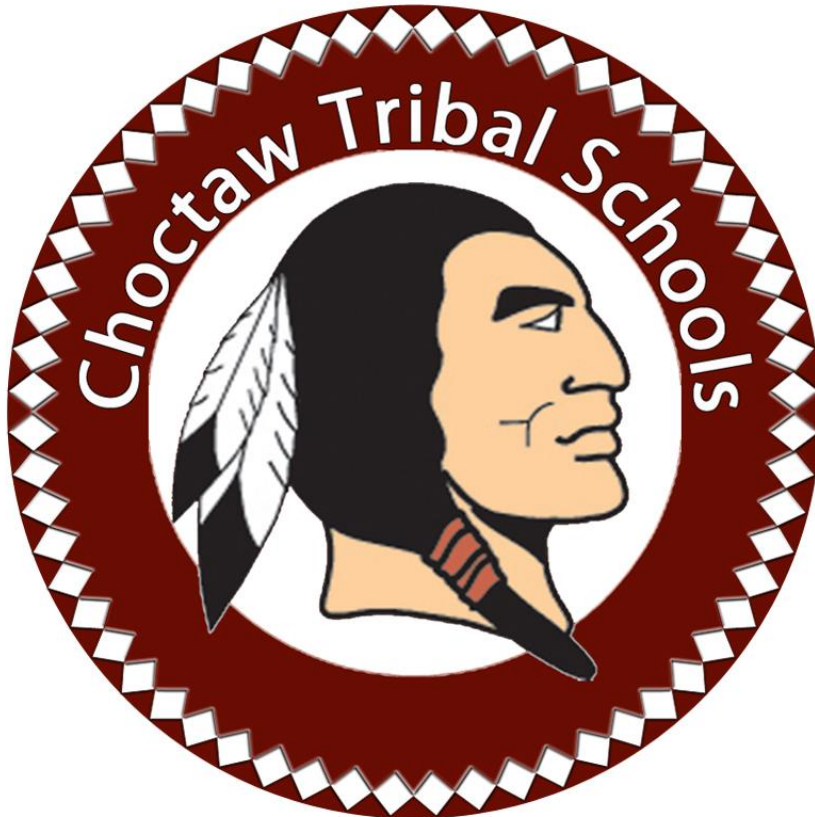
Children who are age five (5) by September 1 and who have not attained the age of eighteen years on or before September 1 of the calendar year are mandated by tribal law to be in school.

According to the Choctaw Tribal Code Section 3-6-33, any parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child who fails to send a child to school may be subject to fines and/or imprisonment. This also applies to Pre-K students when parents elect to enroll their child in the school program.

If the compulsory-school-age child has not been enrolled in school within 15 calendar days after the first day of the school year for the Choctaw Tribal Schools or such child has accumulated five (5) unexcused absences at any time during the school year, the school staff will report such truancy to the School Attendance Officer and to Choctaw Social Services, if deemed appropriate. The principal or designated personnel will be responsible for assuring that the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child is contacted in person.

Arrival

Each elementary school has arrival protocol for their students. If your student arrives on the bus, they will be directed to either enter their classroom, the school cafeteria or a designated area for proper supervision. If your child does not ride a bus, please follow your school's procedure for proper drop off location to maintain utmost safety in the school bus drop off zones. Once a student has arrived on the school premises, he or she is not to "socialize" with any person who is not a student or staff member at the school without permission from the principal's office. Socializing means to talk to, get in the car with, or accept food and drinks from.



Daily Schedules of Choctaw Tribal Schools

Bogue Chitto Elementary (PreK-8)

Doors Open: 7:00 a.m.
Breakfast: 7:30–7:55 a.m.
School begins **8:00 a.m. promptly**
Lunch 11:00–12:30 p.m. (Shifts)
PreK dismissal: 2:00 p.m.
Dismissal 3:00 p.m. (Regular School)
After School Dismissal: 4:30 p.m.
Office Hours: Monday–Friday 7:30–4:30

Conehatta Elementary (PreK-8)

Doors open: 7:00 a.m.
Breakfast: 7:15–7:55 a.m.
School begins: **8:00 a.m. promptly**
Lunch: 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. (Shifts)
PreK dismissal: 3:00 p.m.
Dismissal 3:00 p.m. (Regular School)
After School Dismissal: 4:30 p.m.
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 7:30-4:30

Pearl River Elementary (PreK-6)

Doors Open: 7:00 a.m.
Breakfast: 7:15 – 7:55 a.m.
School begins: **8:00 a.m. promptly**
Lunch: 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. (Shifts)
Pre-K Dismissal: 2:30 p.m.
Dismissal 3:00 p.m. (Regular School)
After School Dismissal: 4:30 p.m.
Office Hours: Monday–Friday 7:30-4:30

Red Water Elementary (PreK-8)

Doors Open: 7:00 a.m.
Breakfast 7:30 a.m.–7:55 a.m.
School begins **8:00 a.m. promptly**
Lunch: 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. (Shifts)
PreK dismissal: 3:00 p.m.
Dismissal 3:00 p.m. (Regular School)
After School Dismissal: 4:30 p.m.
Office Hours: Monday–Friday 7:30–4:30

Standing Pine Elementary (PreK-6)

Doors Open: 7:30 a.m.
Breakfast: 7:30 a.m.–7:55 a.m.
School Begins: **8:00 a.m. promptly**
Lunch 1st Lunch 11:30 2nd Lunch 12:00
Pre-K Dismissal: 3:00 p.m.
Dismissal 3:00 p.m. (Regular School)
After School Dismissal: 4:30 p.m.
Office Hours: Monday–Friday 7:30–4:30

Tucker Elementary (PreK-8)

Doors Open: 7:15 a.m.
Breakfast: 7:30 a.m.
School Begins: **8:00 a.m. promptly**
Lunch 1st Lunch 11:30 2nd Lunch 12:00
Pre-K Dismissal: 2:00 p.m.
Dismissal 3:00 p.m. (Regular School)
After School Dismissal: 4:30 p.m.
Office Hours: Monday–Friday 7:30–4:30



Dismissal

Each elementary school dismisses from the regular school day at 3:00 p.m. Students who ride buses will be supervised and placed on their proper bus for transport home. Unless requests are made in writing in a timely manner, students will be picked up and dropped off at the home location listed on the student enrollment forms. (See *transportation section for more information about required procedures for bus route changes*).

Between 3:00 and 3:30 p.m. students in the after school program will be supervised by staff members as outlined by the school principal, and then delivered to the care of the After School Program staff at the determined location and time.

Times of dismissal for the After School Program will be outlined in the After School Application form. Students who are not picked up in a timely manner from the after school program, may be dropped from attending the program. Parents will be advised of the program hours and required pick up times.

Arriving Late to School (Tardiness/Checkin)

The school day begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. **Being tardy is very disruptive to your child's morning routine as well as those of his/her classmates.** Please assist us in meeting your child's educational needs by making sure your child is at school before 8:00 a.m. If arriving at 8:00 a.m. or later a student will have a late checkin recorded (either excused or unexcused). A parent/guardian **must** bring the student to the office to sign in when the student is arriving after 8:30 a.m.. Students who are late due to a late school bus or problems with breakfast service in the school cafeteria will excused.

Tardiness to school, which includes late checkins and early checkouts will be monitored closely. A student with continual late checkins or early checkouts which accumulate to a partial day or whole day absence, will be referred to the school attendance officer for unexcused absences from school.

All elementary schools will implement the following procedures on dealing with tardiness, late arrivals or early check outs:

<u>Late check-ins / Early check-outs:</u>	<u>Action to be taken / Staff responsible:</u>
At five (5)	Classroom teacher makes a documented contact to parent/guardian giving a copy of the document to counselor and/or designated staff.
After five (5) and up to ten (10)	Principal or designated staff makes a documented notification by phone, letter, and/or home visit to parent/guardian.
After ten (10)	The counselor or designated staff will make a documented home visit or conference at school, with the parent signature on file, and then make a referral to the School Attendance Officer.
For every additional five	The teacher, principal or counselor (as determined at each school) will continue to monitor tardiness, late arrivals and early checkouts to continue to work with families on a plan to improve the student's attendance. Documentation of contacts will be made in the student information system to be reviewed by the school attendance officer.

Sign Out / Check Out Procedure

- **All students must be signed out through the office to be dismissed.** If you will be picking your child up during the school day, please notify his/her classroom teacher with a note sent to school with your child explaining the reason for the checkout, call the office with the information, or come to the office to make staff aware of the reason your child will be leaving. The school attendance clerk will be responsible for recording student check in/out in the student information system, which will include a record in the system of the name of the person who checks out the student.
- Secretarial staff will release your child after you have signed them out. As a safety and security measure, any person checking out a student may be asked to provide photo identification and/or proof of age before a student is released.
- Any person checking out a student must be listed on the *Student Checkout Permission* form and be at least 18 years old. **If there is any question regarding a student's safety, check out of a student may be denied.**
- Absences resulting from late check-in or early check-out will be determined as excused or unexcused in accordance with policy. Minutes not present in school, whether excused or unexcused are still considered as absences. Any absence for an unexcused reason results in a grade of "zero" for the daily grade.

Excused Absences

If your child is going to be absent from school please call the office the morning of the absence before 8:00 a.m. or notify the school in advance when you know your child will miss for approved reasons, according to details below. We are required to document the reason for every student absence; therefore, calls or home visits may be made to the homes of those students whose parents/guardians have not called or notified the school in writing regarding their child's absence. Approved absences are outlined below. All other absences will be recorded as unexcused. When the student must be absent from school, the parents must provide proof of an excused absence as outlined below:

1. **Medical (No more than 9 days)** - A medical absence is defined as any absence resulting from illness, injury, or medical/dental appointment. All medical absences must be supported by a medical note from a doctor. After nine (9) medically excused days from a doctor during the school year, a letter will be required to verify the medical condition of the student to support further excused absences. Medical isolation, as ordered by a health official and homebound status fall under medical absence. Refer to homebound service information under *Student Services*.
2. **Serious illness/Death in the immediate family (3 days)** – Students are allowed three (3) excused days of absence in the event of a serious illness or death of a student's immediate family member. The immediate family is defined as children, spouse, grandparents, parents, or brothers and sisters, including stepbrothers and stepsisters. Any days past the three excused days will fall under parental excuses. If a student has exceeded the number of allowable notes from a parent, then those days will be counted as unexcused absences.

3. **Parental (6 days)** –Students shall be allowed three (3) excused days per semester in which a parent can request an excuse for the student’s absence from school. The note must be signed by the parent and include phone numbers for verification. No more than three days in a semester will be excused based on parental notes. Parental notes must be received within three (3) days of the student’s return to school or they will be considered unexcused. All unexcused absences from school result in a grade of “zero” for the daily grade.
4. **Court Proceedings** – An absence is excused when it results from the attendance of the student at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if such child is a party to the action or under subpoena as witness. A copy of the subpoena or summons must be submitted to the school principal.
5. **Administrative Approval** - Other absences include any activity approved in advance by the principal or Director of Schools. These may include such things as educational opportunities, educational travel, and religious events. Absence must be approved before the absence occurs. Even though an absence is excused, these days are still counted as absences and all work must be made up within three days of a student’s return to school.

Documentation for all absences must be submitted within three (3) school days of a student’s return to school. Students may not wait until the end of the grading period to bring in excuses for earlier absences. If you are unsure of your child’s attendance status, please contact the school or access the parent portal for attendance details. We want to work with you to ensure all attendance is recorded properly. All missed work due to an excused reason must be made up within three (3) days of the students return to school. Even if the student has an excused absence, they may receive a grade of “zero” if they do not make up the work according to policy. Teachers will work with parents and students to ensure that they understand the grading policy and the timelines for makeup work.

Unexcused Absences

- Absences due to Out-of-School Suspension will be considered as unexcused.
- Absences in which students are checked out from school without explanation will be recorded as unexcused.
- Absences in which students miss school with no parental notification to the school and which no medical excuse is provided will be recorded as unexcused.
- Any student with an unexcused absence will be given a grade of “zero” for any graded assignments or tests he or she missed during that period of absence.

All unexcused absences always receive a grade of “zero” for the daily grade. Makeup work will always be provided and graded by the teacher. If the absence is unexcused the student will receive a “zero” in the grade book. Students are encouraged to make up all work missed due to absences, whether excused or unexcused, in order to learn and keep up with coursework.

Number of Unexcused Absences	Action to be taken/ Staff responsible:
At three (3) unexcused absences and/or ten (10) unexcused late checkins or checkouts	1. Classroom teacher makes a documented contact to parent/guardian giving a copy of the document to counselor and/or designated staff monitoring attendance.

<p>At five (5) unexcused absences and/or any additional unexcused late check ins/outs that result in accumulation of the same number of absences.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom teacher makes a documented contact to the parent/guardian, and 2. Designated staff make a documented visit to the home of the student who has excessive absences before the School Attendance Officer is contacted, and 3. Designated school staff sends referral to the School Attendance Officer.
<p>For every additional five (5) unexcused absences and/or unexcused late check ins/outs that result in accumulation of the same number of absences.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom teacher makes continued documented contacts to the parent/guardian, and 2. The teacher, principal or counselor (as determined at each school) will continue to monitor attendance and make a documented home visit or conference at school, in order to continue to work with families on a plan to improve the student's attendance. Documentation of contacts will be made in the student information system to be reviewed by the school attendance officer, and 3. Designated school staff notifies School Attendance Officer of continued absences.

Absences Due to Suspension

Absences due to suspension are always unexcused and can impact a student's grades and referrals to the School Attendance Officer. Please work with your child and the school staff to work on your child's behavior in order to minimize suspensions from school.

Authorized School Activities

- A student is not counted absent when the student is participating in or attending an authorized school activity with prior approval.
- Students who are assigned to In-School-Suspension will be counted as 'present' and given opportunity to make up all work in the same time frame as their peers in class.

School Attendance Officer

The School Attendance Officer will investigate absence reports and shall have the following responsibilities:

- Receive referrals from appropriate school officials, community agencies, and tribal members of compulsory-school-age children not attending school.
- Investigate all cases of nonattendance and unlawful absences by compulsory-school-age children not enrolled in school.
- Cooperate with public and tribal agencies or other courts of competent jurisdiction to assure that the Compulsory Attendance Code is enforced equally for reservation families whose children are enrolled in tribal, public, or private schools.
- Take responsible for filing a petition with the tribal Court when attendance issues are not resolved with compulsory-school-age students. Attendance issues include students who are

regularly tardy, check-in late to school for unexcused reasons and check-out early for unexcused reasons. Not being in school for unexcused reasons means a student is truant.

- Record home visits and any other correspondence to parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child in the school data-base system.
- Communicate with parent/guardian or truant student within two (2) weeks of the school referral and file a petition with the tribal court within one (1) week after contact, if any additional unexcused absences occur. In addition, run daily reports to file immediate petitions when a student has additional unexcused absences.
- Bi-weekly communication/document all contact with each school principal to discuss student attendance concerns for their school.
- Prepare a monthly report of petitions filed to the court to give each school principal and then update status of each of the petitions on future monthly reports to the principal.
- As requested, prepare a **monthly report** of all excessive absences (without the names of students listed) and submit to the Director of Schools and/or to the Chairperson for the Tribal Council Committee on Education.
- The School Attendance Officer has legal authority to detain a student who is away from school without authorization and to hold that student until parents/guardians or Law Enforcement arrives to pick-up the child.

C. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Overview

The elementary schools implement the Mississippi Department of Education PreK-8th grade curriculum framework and the approved Mississippi College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS), as adopted by the Mississippi Department of Education and approved by the Bureau of Indian Education, BIE.

The academic standards set a clear understanding by telling what students are expected to learn by the end of each subject. Choctaw Tribal Schools believe Alla Momat Ikkana Chih, that “all children will learn” challenging materials and reach their full potential. Choctaw language and culture, English language arts, math, science, social studies and art instruction are provided by the classroom teacher through a variety of teaching strategies. Learning will be engaging and challenging by including instructional technology, real world knowledge and a connection with all subjects.

In an effort to share information about each child’s education, the school will provide parents with curriculum information to keep them informed about the subject requirements and standards. The instructional goal is for teachers to plan classwork effectively to meet the needs of the student and assist parents in understanding their student’s success. Each student will keep a data notebook containing information about classwork, writing assignments, formative assessments and test results. The student data notebook will provide students, parents, teachers, and administrators an overview of student progress and achievement. The curriculum department of Choctaw Tribal Schools works with teachers to ensure that the alignment with curriculum, assessment and instruction is current with research-based educational trends.

Pre-Kindergarten Philosophy and Goals for Four-Year-Old Children

The pre-kindergarten philosophy is based on the belief that early childhood is a time crucial to maximize each child's potential. The blending of the culture with the academics reflected in the learning environment is directly aligned to the curriculum's domains and skills developed by the Mississippi Department of Education. The domains provide the foundation of academics, social, emotional, physical, and motor development for our children.

Goals for children attending the Choctaw Tribal Schools' Pre-Kindergarten program:

- celebrate and respect Choctaw culture and language
- develop an enjoyment for learning
- increase intellectual ability to think and interact with others
- promote positive relationships with peers, teachers, and other adults
- encourage the child to express himself/herself in conversations with others
- prepare opportunities to develop self-help skills
- schedule opportunities for supporting peers in cooperative learning experiences
- model and instruct oral language literacy thorough speaking, listening, thinking, writing, and dramatic play activities
- increase skills and competencies in mathematical reasoning and scientific investigation
- promote physical growth through gross and fine motor activities
- provide a high quality research-based program

Kindergarten Philosophy and Goals

The kindergarten program is arranged to address social, emotional, physical, and intellectual areas of development. The blending of culture with the academics is reflected in the creation of a learning environment directly aligned to the standards and skills of the Mississippi Department of Education's curriculum design. Daily activities are planned around learning centers including art, social studies, science, reading, writing, and math literacy. Learning centers allow the opportunity to explore, investigate, question and predict.

Goals for children attending the Choctaw Tribal Schools' Kindergarten Program:

- celebrate and respect Choctaw culture and language
- develop an enjoyment for learning
- promote positive relationships with peers, teachers, and other adults
- provide a caring safe environment that promotes freedom to experiment and explore
- oversee activities promoting cooperation and the ability to work and learn
- provide opportunities for children to become independent curious learners
- implement a systematic phonics instruction program to promote literacy standards in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and dramatic play
- increase instruction using skills and competencies with mathematical practices and scientific inquiry
- increase physical coordination and motor skills
- provide a high quality research-based program

Grading Policy

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, students attending the Choctaw Tribal Schools will receive a report of student achievement at the end of each nine weeks using the following scale:

E	90-100	Excellent
G	80-89	Good
S	70-79	Satisfactory
I	65-69	Improving
N	64 and below	Needs Improvement

In grades 1-8, students attending the Choctaw Tribal Schools will receive numerical grades on their report cards at the end of each nine-week grading period. Letter grades will correspond with numerical averages as follows:

A	90 - 100	Excellent
B	80 - 89	Above Average
C	70 - 79	Average
D	65 - 69	Below Average
F	64 and below	Failing Grade

Grades will carry the following weight toward the final grade on the report card:

Tests	40%		
Classwork	35%		
Homework	10%	9 Weeks Test	15%
	85% +		15% = 100% of weight

Nine weeks tests will be developed using district purchased instructional resources. Part A of the test will be a district common assessment; Part B will be a teacher created assessment.

Standards Mastery will be administered two times each nine weeks and will be used as a tool to guide instruction and support student proficiency of the math and reading standards.

Semester grades will be the average of the two nine weeks' grades. The yearly grade will be the average of the two final semester grades. No summative semester or end-of-year exam will be administered to elementary students.

Mid-term Progress Reports will be given to students four times a year, according to the school calendar. Each student will receive a Progress Report from his/her teacher to take home, be reviewed and signed by the parent/guardian, and returned to the teacher the next day. Numerical grades on Progress Reports will be given according to the school grading scale.

*Accelerated courses offered by distance learning through other agencies may have different grading policies. Contact your local curriculum office for more information.

Special Education Grading Policy

Students with disabilities are often able to achieve the same achievement levels of their on-grade level peers with specialized instruction from a variety of teachers and use of various research-based materials. Grades are assigned based on the district approved grading scale. When students are not functioning on grade level it is our commitment to keep parents/guardians informed of their students functioning level (as compared to their peers).

Parents will be notified at the beginning of school of the "Grading / Graduation Procedures" for students who are receiving accommodations or modifications to their curriculum content as

listed in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Any disabled student who does not meet course requirements (whether regular or special education courses) may receive a failing grade. It is our intent to monitor grades carefully and work with the IEP team to revise services based on the needs of each student. By the 6th grade, student’s transition to high school will be considered to make decisions regarding Regular Diploma, or Certificate of Completion. Grades in 6th – 8th grades will have an impact on decisions made regarding graduation options.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

RTI is a general education curriculum framework that involves research-based instruction and interventions, regular monitoring of student progress, and the use of student data to make decisions. The goal of the RTI process is not only to apply accountability to the educational program, but also to provide instructional support to meet individual student needs. Each school has an RTI team that monitors student progress. If the team identifies a student as needing intervention, parents/guardians are invited to attend meetings developing a plan of action to increase the student’s achievement. Student work and progress data are monitored, and the team sends this information to the District Review Team (DRT). On the team are district curriculum personnel and other education specialists as necessary. When the information folder is received from the schools, the DRT will analyze documents and data, make suggestions, and provide guidance for further interventions. If necessary, the DRT will forward the folder to the Multidiscipline Evaluation Team for additional review.

Assessment and Data Plan

Standardized Testing Program

Standardized testing measures student achievement, academic growth from year-to- year, and how well instructional objectives are being taught in the classroom. Students in grades 3-8 will take the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program ELA (English/Language Arts) and Math Assessment (MAAP) or Mississippi Academic Assessment Program-Alternate (MAAP-A). Grades 5 and 8 will also take the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program Science (MAAP-SCI). These BIE approved assessments will be given in accordance with the Mississippi Department of Education assessment schedules and requirements. These tests are used in the determination of student progress and each school’s academic accountability.

Formative Assessments

The following assessments will be administered district wide. The data reports from each will be used to make data-driven decisions during district, school-based (grade-level), students, parents and community-based meetings. Each report will be kept in data notebooks. **The focus of each data report is to monitor student growth.**

Assessments	Grade Levels	Frequency/Time Period
I-Ready	K - 8	3 times per year (Aug., Nov. and Feb.)
Early Literacy	Pre K	3 times per year(Aug., Jan. and April)
Pre-Las	Pre K	2 times per year (Fall & Spring)
Choctaw Language & Integration Project	K - 3	2 times per year (Fall & Spring)

Data Notebooks

The data from each of the assessments listed above will be kept in data notebooks. During data meetings, on each level, educators will answer the following questions to analyze results and guide instruction:

What does the data say? How do I know?, What will we do about the results?

District Level – Maintain school reports,

School Level- Maintain teacher reports,

Class Level- Maintain student report.

Instructional Technology

Internet and network access is provided to the students and staff at Choctaw Tribal Schools. Computers, tablets, and other electronic technology are tools with which to perform research, retrieve information, compile data, and create documents related to education. Students are expected to report any problems with the technology equipment they have been assigned to use. Teachers will be responsible for educating students on safety related to Internet usage and are required to monitor student activity according to the policy.

The use of equipment, computers, network resources, and the internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of these privileges.

NETWORK ETIQUETTE

Users are expected to abide by the general accepted rules of network etiquette. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Be polite. Messages should not be abusive to others.
- Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language.
- Do not reveal addresses, credit card numbers, or phone numbers
- Illegal activities are strictly forbidden
- Electronic mail is not guaranteed to be private. System administrators have access to all mail.
- Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
- Do not use the network in such a way that others' use of the network would be disrupted.

USERS AGREE TO ABIDE TO THE FOLLOWING:

- Use of the network must be in support of education and research.
- Users must not reveal their password or use other users' passwords.
- Users shall not damage computers, computer systems or computer networks, which include altering software components of a computer or system.
- Users are prohibited from transmitting or intentional receipt of hate mail, harassment, and other antisocial behaviors on the network, including cyberbullying.
- Users shall not use the network to access or process pornographic material, inappropriate text files, or any illegal activity.
- Users agree not to use the chat rooms.
- Users agree not to send chain letters.
- Students agree not to play games on the computers unless authorized by monitoring staff.
- Students shall not send, receive, or check personal E-mail, except with permission before or after school.

COMPUTER LAB/ CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY USAGE:

- Staff members assigned to a group of students are responsible for monitoring and overseeing their network and internet activity.

- No food or drinks allowed around electronic devices.
- Teachers are expected to have lesson plans before students use the internet, which includes researching sites that are used.

CONSEQUENCES OF UNACCEPTABLE USE ARE:

- Suspension and/or termination of network and internet privileges.
- And/or additional disciplinary action as determined at the administrative level regarding unacceptable language and /or behavior.
- And/or referral to law enforcement authorities for criminal or civil prosecution.

Credit Recovery Guidelines

Credit recovery is defined as a course-specific, skill-based learning opportunity for students who have previously been unsuccessful in mastering content/skills required to receive course credit. Applying for credit recovery is an alternative to repeating the entire course for a Carnegie unit. A student must have completed and failed a course in order to qualify for enrollment in credit recovery.

Credit Recovery rules, regulations and processes include the following:

1. An application must be completed that includes parental consent and the school principal's signature, giving approval for enrollment.
2. A student in credit recovery must be enrolled at the school.
3. A student must have previously been enrolled in the full length of the course and received a failing grade posted which was recorded on the transcript.
4. Documentation must be provided which indicates which course standards the student must recover in order to receive credit. It is the responsibility of the student and the school staff to provide multiple pieces of classwork documentation and data points (e.g. portfolio, tutorial assessments) as evidence of the standards that the student has already mastered.
5. A credit recovery plan should be put in place that indicates the standards that the student has not yet mastered.
6. A student is limited to one calendar year to complete a credit recovery course, at which time the student would be dropped from the course and the student would need to enroll in the regular high school course and complete the entire course to get the credit.
7. A student is limited to enrolling in two (2) credit recovery courses at one time
- 8. A student may only receive the minimum passing grade according to the district grading scale.**
9. A teacher may utilize direct instruction, an MDE approved online learning course, and/or supplemental computer assisted instruction in the credit recovery program.
10. A licensed teacher must supervise all delivery of instruction, ensure that all course standards were completed for the course based on the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards competencies and objectives, and issue the final credit recovery grade.

For more information, refer to the approved courses for secondary schools of Mississippi.

Technology Enhanced Instruction

Choctaw Tribal Schools believes in the benefits of technology enhanced instruction to assist our students in achieving challenging coursework to earn Carnegie units toward graduation. A minimum of 70 hours of instruction are provided for each half (.5) Carnegie unit credit offered or 140 hours for one (1) Carnegie unit credit; each program described below will meet these

minimum number of instructional hours. **An exception to these hours would be any course taken as credit recovery** (see credit recovery section).

Blended learning courses are defined as courses delivered through a hybrid instructional delivery model where students are provided face-to-face instruction in a classroom and in part a computer-based, internet-connected learning environment in which a Mississippi-certified teacher who is an employee of the school is responsible for providing instruction and issuing the final grade.

Distance learning courses are defined as courses offered through a technology driven delivery model in which regularly schedule real-time instruction occurs during the school day where students and instructors are not in the same place in which a Mississippi-certified teacher is responsible for providing instruction and issuing grades.

Online courses are defined as courses delivered through an interactive computer-based and internet-connect learning environment, in which students are separated from their teacher by time or location or both and in which a Mississippi-certified teacher is responsible for providing instruction and issuing grades, which has previously been approved as an online course through Mississippi Online Course Application (MOCA) process.

Homework

The Choctaw Tribal School System emphasizes the importance of daily homework assignments that are meaningful and appropriate for individual student learning. As part of the instructional program, classroom teachers will assign homework daily for students to complete. Students are also expected to read daily. Parents and family members support and encouragement are important to your child's success. Please help him/her establish a routine for homework and provide a good work space in which to complete the work. Homework is extremely important to your child's progress as it reinforces and extends the classroom instruction.

Textbooks

The school must follow the rules and regulations of the Mississippi State Textbook Commission regarding the issuing of textbooks. Textbooks will be issued to all students. Lost or damaged books must be paid for by the student or his/her parent/guardian before another is issued. All fines must be paid so that student records may be cleared. Classroom teachers will conduct monthly textbook checks and report missing books to the school textbook coordinator.

Honor Roll

An Honor Roll of students in grades 1-8 will be published one week after report cards are issued following each nine-week term. To be on the Chief's List, a student shall have all A's in the core academic areas – English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Reading (if Reading is taught for a separate grade). To be on the Principal's List, a student shall have all A's or B's in the core academic areas – English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Reading (if Reading is taught for a separate grade).

Subject Area Awards

An awards day will be held at each school to recognize the student with the highest academic average for each subject. In case of a tie, each student will receive an award.

Perfect Attendance Award

To be eligible for Perfect Attendance, a student must be in school each and every day with no tardiness, no late check-ins and no early check-outs. Perfect attendance awards for the end of the year awards banquet will be based only on the first three nine weeks.

Attendance Excellence Award

To be eligible for the Attendance Excellence Award, a student must have no more than three (3) days excused absences (counting all check-in and check-out minutes) with no more than five (5) tardies. Students are not eligible for the attendance excellence award if they have any unexcused absences. Attendance excellence will be based only on the first three nine weeks.

Awards Programs

Choctaw Tribal Elementary Schools honor kindergarten through eighth grade students at annual awards programs. Students receive recognition during the event for honor roll, perfect attendance, good citizenship, leadership, regional and state winners, and academic achievement. Parents, teachers, administrators, council members, and tribal officials recognize the importance of honoring academic achievement during this ceremony. All awards given to students will be documented by the school counselor in the Native American Student Information System (NASIS). A school may give other awards according to its own established criteria.

Promotion & Retention Policy

- A student will be promoted based upon mastery of standards and objectives for each course for his/her grade level.
- Successful completion of a course shall be based on the student having a final grade of 65 or higher.
- Materials presented and assessed must be inclusive of all state standards and objectives for the specific course. To be promoted a student must achieve a passing grade in math, language arts/English, reading, science, and social studies. Students will be retained if they do not meet these requirements.

Social Promotion

Parents/guardians and school personnel must work together to identify remedies or alternative educational opportunities for students being considered for social promotion including RTI support, any need for special education services, tutoring programs, alternative programming or behavioral support to help the student catch up with his/her peers. Before a student can be either socially promoted to a higher grade or moved back a grade for exceptional reasons, a Multidisciplinary Team, or IEP Committee must meet and make a recommendation. All social promotions recommendations are not finalized until approved or disapproved by the Director of Schools.

Physical Education

In grades K-8, each student will receive Physical Education instruction that is based on the P.E. curriculum of the Mississippi Department of Education. Every student will receive a minimum of thirty minutes of planned/structured physical education from a certified P.E. teacher every week of the school year. Grades in P.E. are to be based only on participation and effort by the student, not on the physical ability or lack of ability of the student. P.E. grades may not be based on participation in the National Physical Fitness Challenge, although all students are encouraged to participate. Because P.E. is designed as a developmental program for wellness, P.E. grades should not disqualify an elementary student from the honor roll.

D. PARENT COMMUNICATION

Telephone Use

Telephones are for business use only. Students will not be permitted to make or receive personal telephone calls. Staff may contact parents and have parents communicate with their child as needed. Phones should not be used inside the classroom during the instructional day.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

The Choctaw Tribal Schools encourage teachers and parents to meet regularly and to take a genuine interest in students attending Choctaw schools. Individual schools, teachers and counselors will schedule times for parents to visit the school to discuss their child's progress and development and to become aware of activities in which their child participates. Parents will be invited to participate in discussions regarding their child's performance in school and are urged to be involved in all Response to Intervention (RTI)/ Teacher Support Team (TST) , and IEP meetings related to their child. Additionally principals, counselors, and teachers will arrange time to visit families and to participate in community activities.

Parents are urged to confer with the teachers concerning their children; however, since interruption of classes interferes with the learning process for other students, it is requested that the parent first contact the principal's office to arrange an appointment with the teacher. All visitors must check in at the office and wear a visitor's pass. Teachers shall refer parents to the office if an appointment has not been made for a conference.

Professional Conduct of Staff in Communications

Because school staff must grade student work, evaluate students or provide feedback in ways that friends do not, **employees may not “friend” a student on social media.** (Exceptions to this would include staff members who are relatives of a student. Even in this case, caution should be used in what is shown and discussed on social media sites). **Staff should never communicate with students through personal texting, personal email or personal social media.** Staff may communicate with students and families through the school monitored email systems and learning platforms. Parents are encouraged to utilize the student information parent portal or email to communicate with teachers. Staff members are permitted to text parent/guardians using personal cell phones during non-instructional time. **Staff text messaging a student on a personal phone is not a school approved use of media. In this same regard, students have a responsibility to not attempt to contact or “friend” employees through social media.**

Parent Portal

The student information system has a login where parent/guardians may view their child's attendance, grades, and other important school related information. Policies regarding use of the portal are listed below:

1. Parent/guardians of students are allowed a user name and password to ONLY their child's information.
2. Parent/guardians are required to reset their password as soon as they receive their login information and keep the password secure at all times.
3. Information accuracy is a shared responsibility among the school, parents/guardians and students. Please keep your information current.

4. The Choctaw Tribal School System maintains the right to add, modify or delete information and Portal functions at any time, as well as the right to deny parents access from the portal with suitable cause.
5. Questions, concerns or errors in data should be sent in writing to the classroom teacher or the local school NASIS Administrator. Parents/guardians will receive a response to their concern within ten (10) school days.
6. If your account gets locked, send your request in writing to the local school NASIS Administrator. Due to confidentiality issues, WE CAN NOT UNLOCK YOUR ACCOUNT OVER THE PHONE.
7. The Portal is subject to electronic monitoring by the Choctaw Tribal School System.

For more information on this resource contact your school counselor.

E. BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Code of Conduct

One of the characteristics of an effective school is a safe, orderly climate conducive to teaching and learning. Students and staff members share the responsibility for creating and supporting a positive school climate. The degree to which students accept their responsibility to demonstrate the type of behavior that promotes a learning climate has a definite effect on their academic achievement.

As children grow older, they are expected to assume more responsibility for their own actions and to exercise self-discipline as part of becoming mature, thinking individuals. Teachers and all school staff are expected to assist in this process and make corrections when necessary.

Student / Staff Responsibilities

One of the characteristics of an effective school is a safe, orderly climate conducive to teaching and learning. Students and staff members share the responsibility for creating and supporting a positive school climate. The degree to which students accept their responsibility to demonstrate the type of behavior that promotes a learning climate has a definite effect on their academic achievement.

The general rules of conduct are:

1. Be in class on time
2. Be prepared for each class
3. Be respectful of the rights and property of others and of the school
4. Be safe
5. Be responsible
6. Maintain good manners, *and*
7. *Immediately* report any unsafe condition to a teacher or staff member.

Parent /Guardian Responsibilities

The assistance of parents is needed in the following ways:

1. Review discipline policies with your children to make sure they understand them.
2. Know where your children are, what they are doing, and with whom they are associating.
3. Expect your children to be in the appropriate place at the correct time, and to behave in a proper manner.

4. Support action by school, security, police, and court officials who are working to create and maintain a safe learning environment for your children.

Positive Behavior Support

Each school will post their recognition of students for positive behavior and academic achievements.

School Property

All school property should be treated with respect. Should anything be damaged, the student will be expected to make adequate repair, pay for the damaged item, or work off the cost of the item(s) during non-instructional time. In addition, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken if it is determined by school officials that the damage was done intentionally. Since maintenance problems related to gum chewing often occur, gum chewing will be restricted in the school.

Hall Rules

Hallways may be crowded, thus creating a congested traffic problem; however, if students follow the simple rules dictated by courtesy and common sense, confusion will be kept to a minimum.

- Make a habit of walking on the right side.
- Do not run in the halls.
- Loud laughter, yelling, whistling or any other unnecessary noise is not permitted.
- If a teacher or visitor comes through the corridor when it is crowded, courteously move to one side.
- Do not block classroom doors or doors leading into the building.
- Be considerate of classes that are being conducted.

No student should be in the hall during instructional time without a hall pass.

Cafeteria Rules

The cafeteria, besides being a place where the nutritional needs of students are met, provides an atmosphere where good human relations can be developed between students and staff and good manners can be reinforced. Students must adhere to the following guidelines:

- All students and school instructional staff are expected to eat in the school cafeteria every day
- Students and staff shall clear tables of all waste and put waste into proper containers
- Tables shall be left clean and orderly; and, if appropriate, chairs left properly spaced at each table.
- All food items must be disposed of properly. No food may be taken from the cafeteria.
- Students are not permitted to bring any drink items into the cafeteria.
- Students must not break into the lunch line or hold places in line for other students.
- The cafeteria will close at 8:00 a.m. for breakfast. Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. will not be served, except in the case of a late arriving bus.

Transportation Regulations & Safety Procedures

The school bus is an extension of the classroom. School bus drivers have authority to keep order on his/her bus and are held responsible for the safety of students while on the bus and for any damages to the bus while on his/her assigned route. Only students who behave and abide by the rules and regulations may ride the bus. Safety is a top priority on all school buses and all passengers should not distract the driver thereby putting everyone on the bus at risk. Drivers are required to report incidents to the school principal immediately in order to maintain a safe and secure bus ride for all students. To ensure student safety, drivers inspect buses before and after every route. School bus rules and regulations are listed below.

At The Bus Stop

- Students should be at the bus stop at least five minutes before scheduled pickup time. **The bus driver is not required to wait or honk the horn.** Considerations will be given on cold or rainy days.
- Stand on the sidewalk or back from the roadway.
- When the bus approaches, stand clear until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- If you miss the bus go home immediately.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to get the child to or from school if the child misses the bus.

Loading the Bus

- Form a single line and board the bus.
- Use the handrail as you go up the steps.
- Go to your assigned seat.
- Students will not be able to ride any bus other than their usual bus without a signed bus change form from the office that is approved by the principal. The note from the office must be given to the driver by the student when boarding the bus.

Conduct on the Bus

- All school rules that apply to conduct at school also apply on the bus.
- Bus drivers will give additional directions and rules to students as needed.
- No eating or drinking on the bus at any time.
- No loud hollering, singing or distracting noises shall be permitted.
- No objects shall be thrown on the bus.
- No part of the body should be on the outside of the bus at any time.
- No scuffling, fighting, and the use of obscene, vulgar or profane language or gestures.
- Do not scratch, mark, or cut any part of the bus. Damage costs will be paid by the person responsible. Bus Drivers are expected to inspect buses daily.
- The emergency door and exit controls should only be used during supervised drills or an actual emergency.

Getting off the Bus

- Stay seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Use the handrail when exiting the bus.
- After boarding the proper bus, students may not leave the bus on its way to or from school, nor be checked out from the bus by anyone. For the safety of all students, parents must check students out from the school prior to bus loading times.
- Pre-K through 3rd grade students must have an adult present when getting off the bus.
- It is the parent's responsibility to have adult supervision for children upon their return home from school. If no one is home to receive a student, the student will be returned to the school for a parent or authorized adult to pick up. Parents will be notified of the problem by phone call, school conference or letter mailed to the home. After the 3rd return of a child to school, the student will lose bus privileges for up to one (1) week. Additional occurrences will result in additional loss of bus privileges. Excessive occurrences will be considered neglect and reported to Child Protective Services.

Personal Appearance Policy

Choctaw Tribal Schools focus on the student and emphasizes student academic performance and respect. It is also the district's desire to promote school safety, improve discipline and

enhance the overall appearance of the learning environment.

Personal Appearance - Students and parents are responsible for maintaining reasonable standards of cleanliness and appropriateness of dress. Students are encouraged to be well-groomed. Students whose dress or appearance is disruptive will be referred to the principal or assistant principal who, working with parents/guardians and the student, will have the responsibility for correcting the problem.

- No pierced body jewelry or decoration, except for ear rings.
- Tattoos and scarification are strongly discouraged and, if considered disruptive, will also result in a conference with the principal and parents/guardians.
- No caps or bandanas may be worn at school, even during cold weather.
- Students may not wear hoods pulled over their heads anywhere on campus.
- Students must wear closed toe shoes. No flip flops, sandals or slides allowed.
- Clothing or articles worn or possessed with profane, inflammatory, vulgar, or immorally suggestive language, alcoholic or tobacco slogans shall not be worn.
- No clothing or articles displaying messages or graphics of illegal drugs/substances.
- No sagging pants. No skinny jeans or low-rise jeans. No leggings, tights, or yoga pants unless worn with a dress/skirt or shirt that covers the hips.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must meet the minimum specification of extending at least to the end of the student's fingertips when the student is standing straight with arms down the side.
- Tank-tops, muscle-shirts, and similar garments may not be worn without a T-shirt. Halter-tops are not permitted. No see-through shirts/blouses. No clothing may be worn which exposes the midriff or waist area.
- No colors, bandanas, symbols, signs or dress associated with gangs or cults will be tolerated. These will result in suspension or expulsion as determined by the Discipline Review Committee.
- No students shall have their body parts painted with paint, liquid paper, ink, or other distracting marks.
- No costumes should be worn to school unless for a special approved activity day (e.g. princess costumes, Halloween outfits-no masks allowed at any time)
- No sleepwear or underwear outside the clothing may be worn
- Appropriate clothing may be worn during cold weather wear, but blankets are never allowed and are not considered clothing nor a jacket. Please come to school properly dressed.
- If an item of dress is questionable, DO NOT WEAR IT.

Violations of Personal Appearance Policy

Level 1: Students with up to three violations will receive a documented verbal warning. The student's parent/guardian will be notified through phone call or letter.

Level 2: A conference with the parent/guardian will be held.

Level 3: Student may be assigned to Step 2 of the Discipline Ladder

Travel Wear – All students traveling with athletic teams must comply with the Personal Appearance Policy or wear official travel uniforms designated by the team coach. Students must comply with policy requirements on school-sponsored field trips.

Spirit Day – Some days during the school year may be designated as a "Spirit Day". On these days, school colors and school organizations will be promoted. Tops may include appropriate shirts that display logos promoting school organizations associated with the

school. On game days, the principal may grant approval for team members and cheerleaders to wear athletic clothing during the school day.

Special Days– Principals may occasionally designate special days to allow a deviation from the dress code. These days will be announced and promoted prior to the event.

Attending Athletic Events

Students who are spectators at athletic events are subject to the same rules that are observed in school and owe the athletes every consideration and respect possible. Students should refrain from the use of abusive language and inconsiderate treatment to visiting athletes and officials. Any unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of the spectators may result in probation for the school.

F. DISCIPLINE PLAN

Disciplinary Plan – Elementary Schools K-8

The Tribal Schools recognize that they cannot, and should not, attempt to list every action which might result in disciplinary procedures. The listing of certain specific rules is not intended, therefore, to exclude other rules which are generally accepted as standards of conduct for citizens of this community.

Principals and Teachers will carefully adhere to all Due Process procedures and will investigate every incident to ensure that victims and innocent students are not punished / disciplined as if they were violators of school rules. It is unfair and unjust to dispense equal punishment for unequal offenses.

All school staff will work with students in a mentoring fashion to help students plan for success at school. Positive Behavior support is a type of discipline that ensures students know rules and helps a student establish a plan to achieve their academic goals through behavioral support. School and family working together is key to success in student behavioral expectations. When a student at **an elementary school chooses** to break the rules and is referred to the office, disciplinary action will be taken according to the discipline ladder shown below.

Classroom teachers will handle the first level of behavioral concerns with a student which include violations of the school or teacher's classroom rules that disrupt classroom operations, but are not disrespectful or disobedient to the teacher. The teacher's corrective action may include the following: counseling with the student; a classroom behavior improvement plan, parental conferences; referrals to counselor or guidance office; restricting the student from classroom privileges, such as recess or other non-instructional activities; assigning the student additional academic responsibilities such as homework or special projects; or any other actions which are determined appropriate by the teacher. When behavior is excessive, disrespectful to the staff and peers, the student will be referred to the school administrator.

The school administrator will determine the appropriate discipline step for the offense when a student is referred from the teacher to the office. **This is a general guide and does not restrict the administrator from making other appropriate discipline decisions.** Student behavior events will be logged into the student's Behavior Tab within the school's NASIS

database by a school administrator or his/her designee. These recorded behavior events may be used as documentation should the student be referred to the District Discipline Review Committee or if there is an appeal of a disciplinary decision. Due Process is ensured at all steps.

DISCIPLINE LADDER

Step 1

- A. Student/principal conference,
- B. Action which may include a written assignment related to the referral, corporal punishment, and/or conference involving student and/or teacher,
- C. Parent Contact (by phone or mail), and
- D. If there is no further referral to the office for five (5) school days the student will be removed from the ladder.

Step 2

- A. Student/principal conference,
- B. Up to two (2) days of in-school isolation (ISI), or corporal punishment,
- C. Parent Contact (by phone or personal visit),
- D. Behavior Intervention Plan shall be put in place,
- E. If there is no further referral to the office for ten (10) school days the student will be removed from the ladder.

Step 3

- A. Student/principal conference,
- B. Up to five (5) days of in-school isolation (ISI) or up to three (3) days of out-of-school suspension,
- C. Parent Contact (by phone or personal visit),
- D. Behavior Intervention Plan shall be put in place or updated,
- E. A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) may be requested
- F. Parent/student/principal conference required at school before student may return to regular school program,
- G. If there is no further referral to the office for fifteen (15) school days the student will be removed from the ladder.

Step 4

- A. Student/principal conference,
- B. Up to five (5) days of out-of-school suspension,
- C. Parent Contact (by phone or personal visit),
- D. Behavior Intervention Plan shall be put in place or updated, with FBA (if appropriate)
- E. Parent/student/principal conference required at school before student may return to regular school program,
- F. If there is no further referral to the office for twenty (20) school days, the student will be removed from the ladder.

Step 5

- A. Student/principal conference,
- B. Up to Ten (10) days of out-of-school suspension,
- C. Referral to Discipline Review Committee and, to consider recommendation of long term suspension, expulsion, or optional/alternative placement,
- D. Parent Contact (by phone and certified mail),

- E. Parent/student/principal conference required at the district and school level before student may return to school,
- F. May not attend or participate in any school activity on any school campus (to include athletic events) pending the outcome of the district discipline hearing.
- G. Possible other restrictions may be required due to suspension, expulsion, or Alternative placement.

Suggested steps for Behavior offenses:

Behavior	Step
Cheating	1, 2, 3, 4
Pretense or Forgery	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Unauthorized presence on school property	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Dress Code Violation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Cell Phone / Other Electronic Device Violation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Tardiness	2, 3, 4
Public Display of Affection to include passion marks (“hickeys”)	2, 3, 4, 5
Disruptive Behavior	3, 4, 5
Profanity, vulgarity, or obscenity (including gestures)	3, 4, 5
Obscene Electronic Communication	3, 4, 5
Leaving campus without authorization	3, 4, 5
Repeated violation of school rules	3, 4, 5
Willful Disobedience/insubordination	3, 4, 5
Brandishing or threatening with an object which appears to be a weapon	3, 4, 5
Truancy to class or school	3, 4, 5
Use, sale or possession of tobacco, including vaping	3, 4, 5
Gang-related affiliation	3, 4, 5
Skipping Class	3, 4, 5
Physical Altercation (minor)	3, 4
Bullying / Including cyberbullying	4, 5
Disorderly conduct	4, 5
Involvement in a sexual act or activity at any time on school grounds or at any school sponsored event	4, 5
Fighting	4, 5
Damaging, defacing or destroying school property*	4, 5
Pulling a Fire Alarm/Discharging a Fire Extinguisher	4, 5
Stealing*	4, 5
Battery	5
Use or attempted use of dangerous objects/weapons/explosives	5
Possession of dangerous objects/weapons/explosives	5
Assault, harassment, or intimidation of school personnel	5
Assault, harassment, or intimidation of other students	5
Use, sale or possession of alcohol and drugs	5
Possession of drug paraphernalia	5
Inappropriate use of, sale or distribution of medication	5
Blocking an entrance/exit to a building	5
Arson	5
Trespassing or Breaking and Entering	5

*Restitution required

Principal has discretion in assignment of steps, depending on the severity of the offense.

Student punishment may carry over to the next school year.

Charges will be filed to the court by the school for any disruptive incidents witnessed by school staff related to violence, illegal substance and/or weapons possession.

Bus Behavior Referrals

When a student is referred to the school office due to a bus referral, the school principal will notify the bus driver of the discipline resolution action.

Based on the severity of the bus behavior (e.g. fighting, major defiance, or violations that create an unsafe condition on the bus) a student may be suspended or expelled from riding the bus and may also be assigned to the school discipline level and probations.

Only the Director of Schools or Principal can lessen the length of a suspension once it has been given. This will only be done by in writing with a complete explanation that is forwarded to the transportation coordinator and bus driver.

Parent Notification of Discipline

In the case of discipline referrals, the school will make every effort to contact parents to keep you informed of your child's behavior. **Please keep phone numbers current at the school so we may reach you at all times. Listed below are the expectations for each Discipline Step:**

Step 1. Principal, Assistant Principal, Social Worker, Home/School Liaison, or Counselor will contact parent by phone. If unable to reach immediately, school secretary or designated staff will be assigned to contact by phone and if unable to reach will mail referral. School staff will document all attempts to contact parents/guardians.

Step 2 and Step 3 and Step 4. Principal, Assistant Principal or ISI staff will contact parent by telephone to notify of corporal punishment or assignments to ISS. If unable to reach after three attempts, staff will refer to Home School Liaison for personal visit to be made. (If not reached, visit should be made by Home School Liaison or designated staff within 24 hours of referral). The referring teacher is also encouraged to make contact with the parent. All attempts to reach parent/guardian will be documented.

Step 3 and Step 4. In the case of an out-of-school suspension, parents/guardians must be notified before the suspension begins. The Home School Liaison will schedule the required school conference where the parents must meet with the principal or assistant principal before the student may return to school and give the date to the principal or appropriate secretary. If required, permission to conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment will be obtained. All meetings and attempts to contact parent/guardian will be documented.

Step 5. Parent contact must be by phone (when possible) or by certified mail. The Home School Liaison will attempt to hand deliver the letter as well. All attempts to contact parent/guardian will be documented.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment, which is limited to the striking of a student on the buttocks with a paddle, may only be administered by the principal or assistant principal in the presence of one other witness **who must be a tribal member**. If a tribal member is the principal or assistant principal administering corporal punishment, another employee must be present to witness the punishment. The classroom teacher of the child being punished should not be the witness, nor may school staff other than the principal or assistant principal administer any physical force or aversive physical stimuli when correcting student behavior.

- Prior to administering corporal punishment, the principal or assistant principal must advise the student of the particular misconduct for which he or she is to be punished and give the student a chance to give his/her version of the facts.
- Additionally, corporal punishment, or the threat of corporal punishment, may not be used to stimulate academic achievement or to punish academic lapses.
- **In instances where corporal punishment is refused, suspension or in-school isolation is a mandatory alternative punishment.**
- In all cases where corporal punishment is administered, a discipline form must be completed and mailed to the parent. Behavioral data will be maintained in the school information system.

An authorization form is included in the Student Enrollment application each year that parents/guardians must fill out indicating whether they do or do not wish for their child/children to receive corporal punishment.

In-School Isolation

In-School Isolation (ISI) is a disciplinary action of removing a student from a scheduled class and placing him or her in an isolated, closely supervised environment in an effort to correct behavior. The ISI room will be monitored by an adult employed by the school system. The intent of ISI is to correct behavior that led to their placement and help students successfully return to the regular classroom. Elementary principals may designate an in-school isolation room at the local level. In cases where this form of discipline is utilized, parents will be notified of the local schools ISI location and rules expected to be followed.

- Students will receive assignments from their classroom teacher who will check on their progress during the day.
- Students will be assigned time to work on conflict resolution skills or decision making training to build opportunities for better behavior. A behavior contract will be completed that will be turned in to the Principal prior to returning to the regular classroom.
- Placement in ISI does not count as an absence for the student and the student must complete assigned work that they may have missed in the classroom in order to receive a grade.
- Students who refuse to follow ISI guidelines will be given out-of-school suspension.
- Students assigned to ISI do not enjoy school privileges, events, or assemblies during their placement and are not allowed to participate in any extracurricular activity that occurs during their placement.

Suspension (Out-of-School)

Out-of-school suspension (OSS) is defined as a denial of school attendance for a student. A student who is suspended from school is also suspended from participation in or attendance to all school-related events or non-school events hosted on the school campus.

- Out-of-school suspension (OSS) can be assigned to students from one (1) to ten (10) days based on the severity of the offense related to the school or classroom rules.
- Suspension days are considered unexcused absences, with students receiving a zero for classroom assignments missed while the student was suspended.
- Students are subject to restrictions from all extra-curricular activities while on suspension from school. (See section on Attendance requirements)
- Parents will be contacted about the suspension and required conferences will be set up before the student returns to school.
- Due process procedures will be followed in all cases regarding suspension from school.

Expulsion

For any offense other than the possession of a weapon or explosive device, expulsion is defined as any denial of school attendance which will terminate at the beginning of the next school year.

- Expulsion which results from the possession of a firearm or explosive device shall be for one calendar year.
- A student may appeal an expulsion through the following levels: (1) the Director of Schools, (2) the Director of Education, (3) the Tribal Chief.
- A student who is expelled will be encouraged to pursue alternative forms of education. A student who is expelled shall not be allowed on campus at any time during his/her expulsion and shall not be allowed to attend any school-related activities. This will apply to all schools in the Choctaw Tribal School System.
- Any student who has faced an expulsion or suspension in another school district must complete the expulsion and/or suspension before they will be allowed to enter the Choctaw Tribal School System.

Detention

Students may receive Early Morning Detention or After-School Detention as determined by the Principal with the guidelines being explained to the parent/guardian. Students who fail to report to detention are subject to suspension.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty will be defined as receiving or giving aid on any exam, written assignment, quiz, recitation, or project. Participation in academic dishonesty will result in the following:

1. An automatic zero (0) for that particular exam, written assignment, quiz, recitation or project
2. For a second occurrence, an automatic loss of academic or extra-curricular privileges as deemed necessary by the principal and a required conference with the parent(s), student, teacher, and an administrator before credit for the course will be given.
3. Students may not appeal the Principal's decision regarding academic dishonesty beyond the Director of Schools.

Policies for Weapons, Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco

Weapons Policy, including Explosives – Grades 7-12

Guns

Choctaw Tribal Schools fully support the enforcement of the Gun-Free Schools Act, Title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Any student who is in possession of any type of firearm or air/gas powered gun (pellet, BB, etc.), operable or inoperable, while in school, on school property, on the school bus, on the way to or from school, at any school function or activity, or has such object in a vehicle on school property, shall immediately be suspended from school for ten (10) days and recommended to the Discipline Review Committee for expulsion for no less than one calendar year from all programs of the Choctaw Tribal Schools.

Students who possess other types of "guns" (stopper guns, cap guns, water guns, and other toy

guns) shall be suspended from school for ten (10) days. A second offense shall constitute a ten (10) day suspension with a recommendation to the Discipline Review Committee for expulsion. Students who possess and use such “guns” to threaten, intimidate, and /or otherwise disrupt the school environment shall be immediately suspended and recommended for expulsion.

Guns in student possession will be seized and turned over to the Department of Public Safety.

Other Weapons or Explosives – Possession of

Possession, by a student, of any hard or sharp object, such as a knife, brass knuckles, etc., that may be considered a weapon or a taser device or any explosive or potentially explosive devices while at school, on school property, on the school bus, on the way to or from school or any school function or activity, regardless of the object’s original purpose, shall be considered in violation of this policy. Students who possess these objects will be immediately suspended from school for ten (10) days and recommended to the Discipline Review Committee for expulsion for a period of up to one calendar year.

Other Weapons – Use of

Any object used as a weapon by a student shall be seized and after due investigation and due process shall be turned over to school security or Department of Public Safety. Principals shall use their own discretion in each instance not involving a gun concerning the necessity of notification of the appropriate law enforcement authority.

Drug, Alcohol, Tobacco Policy – Grades 7-12

The health and safety risks of tobacco use, alcohol use, and illicit drug use are well documented. The possession of illicit drugs is illegal. In addition, the possession, use, and distribution of alcohol and tobacco to citizens under the age of 21 are illegal. The use/abuse, possession, or distribution of these substances is strictly prohibited at school, on school property, or while attending any school activity. The following disciplinary actions will be consistently imposed:

A. Any individual found to possess, distribute, or be under the influence of alcohol, alcoholic beverages, inhalants, any controlled substance (including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, any hallucinogen, any stimulant, depressant, “look alike”, prescription drugs, or counterfeit substance, represented or believed to be any of the aforementioned substances) shall be disciplined according to step 5 of the school discipline ladder which includes:

- a. Ten (10) days out-of-school suspension and
- b. Recommendation of expulsion for one calendar year to the Discipline Review Committee.

In addition, the school must immediately call the Choctaw Police Department and request that police come to the school campus. All illegal substances will be turned over to police, and charges will be filed as appropriate.

B. Any individual found to inappropriately possess, distribute, misuse/abuse any prescription or non-prescription drug shall be disciplined according to step 5 of the school discipline ladder which includes:

- a. Ten (10) days out-of-school suspension and
- b. Recommendation of expulsion for one calendar year to the Discipline Review Committee.

In addition, the school must immediately call the Choctaw Police Department and request that police come to the school campus. All illegal substances will be turned over to police, and charges will be filed as appropriate.

C. Any student found to possess, distribute or use tobacco, in any form shall be disciplined

according to step 3 of the school discipline ladder. Subsequent violations shall be dealt with at the appropriate higher step to include referral to the Discipline Review Committee.

Discipline Review Committee Guidelines

Discipline Review Committees shall be used as a due process hearing committee in several instances to include the following:

1. Recommendations of expulsion or suspension (in excess of 10 days) by building principal.
2. Recommendations by a building principal for Alternative placement for disciplinary, educational, safety or attendance reasons. The alternative placement shall include Alternative Education Center, GED program, another school within the Department of Schools, or other placement available to the Department of Schools.
3. Other reasons as outlined in the Student Handbook.
4. Other reason deemed advisable by a building principal.
5. Appeal of a short-term suspension of five to ten days. Appeals of less than five days may be appealed only to the building principal.

Composition of Discipline Review Committees:

1. A presiding officer, appointed by the Director of Schools, who ensures that the rules of the proceeding are communicated and adhered to by all parties. It is also the duty of the presiding officer to have the minutes of the hearing transcribed in an accurate manner, and to forward the recommendation of the committee to the parents and Director of Schools. The presiding officer is not a member of the committee. The presiding officer may be assisted by a recording secretary or court reporter.
2. There shall be three (3) Committee members on the Discipline Review Committee. Members are preferably school administrators, but may include other school employees (to ensure tribal representation on the committee) who are familiar with school policy, rules, and due process. **Members shall not work on the same campus as the student or recommending principal or be a relative or close family friend of anyone involved.**

Purpose of Discipline Review Committee

1. To ensure fair and impartial disciplinary action within the Department of Schools.
2. To review all evidence presented (both written and oral testimony), and make recommendations to the Director of Schools based on the evidence presented.
3. To ensure due process safeguards have been and are maintained.
4. To ensure that school rules are fairly applied.
5. To make a recommendation to the Director of Schools that upholds, rejects, or modifies the Principal's recommendation.

Procedural Guidelines

The constitutional rights of individuals require the protection of due process of law; therefore, adherence to a system of constitutionally and legally sound procedures is essential. The presiding office shall ensure the following:

1. Written notice of charges against a student or reason for the review shall be supplied to the student and parent.
2. The parent or guardian shall be present at the hearing.
3. Parents are informed they may be represented by legal counsel at their own expense.
4. Hearings shall be closed to the public to protect the student.

5. The student shall be given an opportunity to give his version of facts and their implications. He shall be allowed to offer the testimony of other witnesses and other evidence if relevant.
6. The student shall be allowed to observe all evidence offered against him.
7. The hearing shall be conducted in an impartial manner, and the committee's determination shall be based solely upon the evidence presented at the hearing.
8. A record shall be kept of the hearing and retained by the Director of Schools in a secure location.
9. Within three (3) business days after the hearing, the committee shall make its decision as to disciplinary action.
10. The findings shall be reduced to writing and sent to the student, parent, and the Director of Schools.
11. The student and his parent shall be made aware, by the presiding officer, of their right to appeal the decision to the Director of Schools, the Director of Education, and, ultimately, to the Tribal Chief.
12. Appeals must be submitted within five (5) business days of the parent notification of the decision by Certified Mail from the presiding officer.
13. If an appeal is submitted, the Director of Schools, the Director of Education, or Tribal Chief will act within five (5) business days as to whether the appeal is approved or denied and only based upon the record from the hearing.

Guidance for Discipline Review Committee:

The Principal should ensure that all behavior intervention documentation is submitted to the presiding chair of the Discipline Review Committee before a student is suspended for 10 days, except in the case of a violation of a weapons or drugs policy, in which case the suspension would begin immediately. In this case, documentation should be submitted to the committee with the request for a hearing within two (2) school days after the suspension begins. **Principals** should email the request for a discipline review committee hearing to the following district staff within 24 hours or 1 school day of the discipline incident in which the principal is requesting a discipline review:

- 1) Presiding Officer 2) Recording Secretary 3) Director of Schools.

Principals should send information to the Presiding Officer within two (2) school days after the request for a hearing (by emailing or sending by interoffice mail). The information that should be sent to the Presiding officer includes: discipline paperwork, reports and evidence regarding the incident and any behavior intervention documentation provided to the student. This allows the team time to review all information needed as they prepare for the discipline review hearing.

Every effort should be made by the **Presiding Officer** to arrange the hearing within three (3) school days after the incident. The Presiding Officer should document in the student information system all attempts to reach guardians to set up the discipline review hearing. The goal is to convene the hearing quickly, so the student either returns to a school setting or the family knows the outcome of the hearing as soon as possible.

Definitions Related to Discipline

Alcohol possession—Students responsible in any way for alcoholic beverages of any

description being on a person, in a school building; on a school bus; on school property; at any off-campus activity sponsored by the school—to, from, and/or at; adjacent to school property.

Arson- the criminal act of deliberately setting fire to property.

Assault—Any attempt with force and violence to do bodily injury to another; includes threatening, bullying and other forms of intimidation.

Battery- To inflict bodily injury to another.

Behavior Intervention Plan -an agreement between the student and school outlining what behavior is expected and what the student, school, teachers, administrators and other entities will contribute to support the student's appropriate behavior. A behavior plan should contain rewards and sanctions. Temporary plans may be developed by the principal and student. More extensive plans may to be developed by a committee comprising teachers, counselors, behavior intervention staff, school support staff, parents and the student through the School Support Team.

Bullying- to seek to harm, intimidate, humiliate or coerce

Cheating—Any act of giving or receiving information on tests and exams.

Cyberbullying- Bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. It can occur through SMS, text, and apps, or on-line in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, hosting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment, or humiliation.

Disobedience—The failure to act upon or to follow instructions by the person in charge.

Disorderly conduct- unruly behavior that “disturbs the peace” of the school setting, often requiring school administration to contact public safety officers.

Disruptive Behavior—Any act, physical or vocal, which makes it difficult to continue normal activities.

Drug paraphernalia- any equipment, product or accessory that is modified for making, using, or concealing drugs, typically for recreational purposes.

Drug possession—Students responsible in any way for illegal drugs of any description being on a person, in a school building; on a school bus; on school property; at any off-campus activity sponsored by the school—to, from, and/or at; adjacent to school property.

Drug/Alcohol Use—Students under the influence of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs at any place under the jurisdiction of the school.

Electronic Device Violation- use of a cell phone or other device during unauthorized times or locations; misuse of a device in any way.

Fight- two or more individuals willingly taking part in a violent struggle involving the exchange of physical blows or the use of weapons.

Forgery- to falsify a document with the intent to deceive, usually by signing someone's name to a document pretending to be the person.

Gang- an organized group of criminals; often they have adopted colors, signs or creeds they are expected to use, wear and obey.

Harassment- Misconduct which involves verbal, physical contact, or written words that are unwelcome, intimidating, offensive, annoying, threatening, or put a person in fear of their safety.

Internet Abuse—Any use of the internet that is prohibited under acceptable use policies.

Medication – a drug prescribed by a doctor used to diagnose, cure, treat, or prevent disease, prescribed to a specific individual; also a non-prescribed substance used in the same way.

Obscenity—An act or expression which is offensive to the prevailing concepts of morality or decency of the school community; stressing or suggesting indecency, lust or depravity, offensive to the senses.

Physical altercation-A physical altercation is generally a confrontation, tussle or physical aggression that may or may not result in injury.

Pretense—An act of telling a falsehood with the intent to deceive.

Profanity—The irreverent use of a sacred name or the use of words considered lewd or coarse, swearing, cursing or other vile words showing contempt.

Public Display of Affection—Kissing any part of another person's body, sitting on another's lap, embracing/hugging/holding any part of another person's body, licking any part of another person's body, pinching/grabbing/squeezing any part of another person's body, passion marks / "hickeys."

Sexual act or activity- physical contact between two people beyond normal interaction meant to entice lust, foreplay, including intercourse.

Sexual Harassment—Misconduct of a sexual nature, which involves verbal or physical contact that is unwelcome, intimidating or offensive. This includes, but not limited to, unwelcome touching or verbal comments.

Stealing—Any act of removing public or private property without the consent of the owner.

Tardiness- arriving late for school and/or to scheduled class or lunch periods.

Tobacco Use/Possession—Students responsible in any way for tobacco of any description being on a person; in a school building; on a school bus; on school property; at any off-campus activity sponsored by the school.

Trespassing- to be on school property after regular school hours without approval or in unauthorized locations (before, during or after school) without approval.

Truancy—An act of being absent without permission from school or class.(Includes tardiness).

Vandalism—Any act of destroying, altering, defacing or otherwise damaging public or private property.

Vapping- the action or practice of inhaling and exhaling the vapor produced by an electronic cigarette or similar device.

Violence- Any act of bullying, threatening, intimidation or physical harm.

Vulgarity —The use of words or actions which are offensive to anyone present to tend to defame the character of another person; obscene words or actions.

Weapons possession—Possessing any instrument capable of causing bodily harm.

Weapons possession with threat to use—Any overt display of and/or threat to use any instrument capable of causing bodily harm.

G. PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Personal belongings permitted by teachers and parents may be brought to school as long as they do not become disruptive and are not used for purposes other than those permitted by the teacher. Any items of personal belonging which are not approved by the teacher will be kept in the principal's office. The Choctaw Tribal Schools will not be responsible for lost or stolen personal belongings.

Electronic Devices

The Choctaw Tribal School System is aware of advances in technology and values the role it can have in the education of students. Cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used, displayed, or turned on during class time unless directed by a teacher specifically to support instruction as included in the lesson plan. Otherwise, students shall not use, display, or turn on cellular phones, i-pods, mp3s, lasers, communication beepers, video phones, pagers or other electronic devices during the regular school day. Cell phones should also be off and put away on school system operated vehicles and during an emergency drill/evacuation. It is a violation of the use of an electronic device to video another person without their consent. Violations will result in the item being confiscated and turned in to the main office. The confiscated item will be returned only to a parent or guardian after school on the following school day on the first offense, \$10; after

7 calendar days for the second offense, \$20; and, at the end of the semester after the third offense.

All items not claimed by the end of the year will be discarded. Choctaw Tribal Schools shall not be responsible for any broken, lost or stolen items. The confiscation of a cell phone during any state-wide subject area or grade level testing must be reported to the Mississippi Department of Education may result in the student automatically failing that test. *School officials may review the contents of any electronic device found at school if they have reason to believe that the contents of the phone could assist in an investigation or if there are allegations that there is inappropriate content on the device.* Please refer to Discipline Plan and Social media policy for further guidance on this topic.

Lost and Found Articles

Students who have lost an article of value should notify the principal's office. Students who have found an article of value should take it to the principal's office. Parents are encouraged to have the name of their child written on clothing tags, especially jackets.

H. STUDENT SERVICES

Drop Out Prevention

Each school will prepare a dropout prevention plan to address the specific needs of their students and community. The plan should include goals for the school to address the identified needs of their student population, initiatives that will be implemented for students/families and a means of evaluating progress toward the goals set. The local school team should include at the least the following members: the principal, a parent, a special education staff, a regular education teacher, the local RTI chairperson and a student representative. An annual review of the plan is required.

Counseling Services

Guidance Counselors are employed at each school to aid the growth and development of students as they progress through their educational programs. Counselors strive to provide opportunities for each student to develop an understanding of his or her abilities and to base future academic, vocational, and personal decisions upon this knowledge.

School Counselors, Home/School Liaisons, and School Social Workers are required to make documented visits to the homes of students who have excessive absences before they contact the School Attendance Officer. Counselors are actively involved in the following:

1. Student orientation and registration
2. Selecting programs and scheduling classes to meet students' needs
3. School testing programs
4. Identification of abilities, interests, and special aptitudes for educational placement and career planning, with emphasis for all schools including elementary, middle and high school students.
5. Improvement of social and/or academic adjustments through both individual and group counseling
6. Appraisal and assessment activities
7. Obtaining information on college entrance requirements and available scholarships, assisting in college applications, and helping to secure funds
8. Consultation with faculty, parents, and administrators
9. Referral to outside agencies

10. Transition activities for all students as they move from elementary, to middle and then high school
11. Promotion of school-wide Student Advocacy Plan to provide mentoring/support to all students.

Library

All students are entitled to use the library and to check out books. Students must observe all rules posted in the library. Elementary school students will visit the library according to schedules and arrangements at their local schools. The purpose of the library is to enrich the educational program and to help fulfill the philosophy of the tribal school system. In addition to meeting the needs of the educational program, the libraries will be used to stimulate independent reading, studying, and research. To provide an adequate program for both students and teachers, the following guidelines will be used:

1. Books may be checked out for a period of one week. Students may renew books if they wish.
2. Students will be held responsible for books checked out from the library and required to replace or pay for library books which are lost or destroyed.

Choctaw Central Dormitory

Parents who are interested in the Choctaw Dormitory should contact the Dormitory staff to schedule a visit or to request a Dormitory Handbook.

Homebound Services

When medical reasons make it necessary for a student to be absent from school for ten or more consecutive school days, that student may be placed on a home-bound instructional program developed and implemented by the school principal, the school counselor, and the student's classroom teacher(s). A written recommendation by the student's physician is required before the student can be assigned home-bound status. The physician's statement should also include the date of expected return to school. Students on approved homebound status will receive at least 5 hours of weekly services from a certified teacher. Days away from school on approved home-bound status count as an excused absence until the attendance waiver is approved by the BIE. Homebound students will receive instruction from a certified teacher a minimum of five hours per week while on homebound status. If parents/guardians fail to make the student available for homebound services, the absence may be considered unexcused. Students with disabilities must have an IEP meeting before beginning homebound services and upon returning to school at the conclusion of those services. This would be considered a change in placement.

Alternative Education Program

The Alternative Education Program is a program that provides an alternative placement setting for students with special discipline needs.. Alternative placement must be based on a student's behavior problems; placement is not to be based on excessive tardiness or other attendance issues, but on the response to intervention (RTI) needs and documentation for the student. The program works to keep students in school, meet their current educational needs, and provide additional services as determined by a Discipline Review Committee, Multidisciplinary Team, or IEP committee. Placement is based on the following criteria:

1. Individual needs of the student as detailed in the academic file, disciplinary file, or IEP determination.
2. Written recommendation of the school principal. (See Alternative Principal for referral forms.)

Students with disabilities must have an IEP meeting prior to a change in placement. The IEP Committee will address the behaviors of concern, review current behavior plans and goals and develop additional goals if needed.

In all cases, parents/guardians will have an opportunity to discuss their child's placement into the Alternative Education Program. If the team determines that the Alternative Education Program is the best placement for the student, the parent/guardian cannot override the decision, but allow the parent to appeal the decision as outlined in the due process procedures of this handbook.

During a student's placement in the Alternative Program, he or she is suspended from participation in all extra-curricular programs and activities (including practices) at the home school and also suspended from visiting the home school at any time during the school day.

The standard school dress code is required attire for the Alternative Program.

Students who are assigned to the Alternative Education Program will receive mandatory counseling from the assigned behavioral interventionist or counselor. Participation in assigned counseling is required as part of placement. Behavior Health services and/or Wellness programs will be utilized based on parent/guardian approval.

For security and safety reasons, students in the Alternative Education Program may be required to submit to random testing for drugs and alcohol. Failure to submit to such testing is grounds for immediate expulsion from the Choctaw Tribal School System. Failure to pass such testing may be grounds for extension of placement time in the Alternative Education Program or other appropriate disciplinary action. Successful passing of such testing may be a requirement for return to the regular education program.

An Exit Meeting including the student, school administrators, and parents/guardians **must be held** either in person or by teleconference before the student may return to their school campus.

Principals will make recommendation as to the placement days recommended for the student at the Alternative Education Program. Students returning from Alternative placement will be placed on an automatic probation period of twenty (20) school days during which time students may be returned to the Alternative program without hearing for failure to comply with terms of probation. When possible, it is recommended that students return to their school at the beginning of a nine week term so all work completed at the alternative can be averaged and posted.

A student who is placed in the Alternative Education Program for drug and/or alcohol violations may be ordered by the Choctaw Tribal Court System to participate in the Youth Healing to Wellness Court Program and will comply fully with all program requirements. Participation in wellness or any other behavioral counseling program will be reviewed before a student is released from the Alternative Program. Alternative Education is a program not a location. Alternative Staff will follow district policy for recording attendance, behavior and grades in the student information system.

For more information about the Alternative Education Center, call 663-7777.

Students with Disabilities

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in the area of public elementary and secondary education, is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. Section 504 regulations require a school district to provide a “free appropriate public education” (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability. An appropriate education for a student with a disability under the Section 504 could consist of education in regular classrooms, education in regular classes with supplementary services, and/or special education and related services. School districts are required to individually evaluate a student before classifying the student as having a disability or providing the student with special education. An impairment in and of itself is not a disability. The impairment must substantially limit one or more major life activities in order to be considered a disability under Section 504. The school district may initiate a Section 504 due process hearing to resolve a dispute if the district believes the student needs a service in order to receive an appropriate education. If a student is eligible for services under IDEA (Special Education Law) and an IEP has been implemented, then the requirements for a free appropriate public education required by Section 504 have been met. If you have questions about Special Education or Section 504 you may call the Exceptional Education Coordinator or the 504 coordinator at 601) 663-7643.

Gifted Program

Students who are identified as eligible, may receive additional services related to their areas of giftedness. Gifted students often show evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in a specific academic field; and need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the general school program in order to fully develop those capabilities. Please contact your local school principal for more information on the school’s talented and gifted program.

Lost and Found Articles

Students who have lost an article of value should notify the principal's office. Students who have found an article of value should take it to the principal's office.

I. HEALTH SERVICES

Nutrition

Cafeteria managers will provide information on diet and nutrition to all students in the Choctaw Tribal Schools.

Wellness Policy

The Choctaw Tribal School System has adopted the Wellness Policy published by the Mississippi Department of Education and approved by the Choctaw Tribal Council as official policy and guidance for school programs, activities, and curriculum. This policy includes goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other promotions of student wellness, as well as guidance/requirements for school meals, snacks, refreshments, and food sales. All schools will follow the guidelines established in this policy. All students will receive at least thirty minutes of physical education time per week from a certified P.E. instructor as mandated by the Mississippi Department of Education. School nurses, prevention instructors, health teachers and cafeteria managers will provide information on diet and nutrition to all students in the Choctaw Tribal Schools.

This policy applies to all schools and programs within the Choctaw Tribal School System.

To help combat childhood obesity and improve children's health, the **Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (PL # 108-265)** requires each local educational agency that receives funding for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs to establish a local school wellness policy. With this requirement, the U.S. Congress recognizes that schools play a critical role in creating a healthy environment for the prevention of childhood obesity and for combating problems, like Type 2 diabetes, that are associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity.

Rationale

The link between nutrition, physical activity, and learning is well documented. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating and physical activity, essential for a healthy weight, are also linked to reduced risk for many chronic diseases, like Type 2 diabetes. Schools have a responsibility to help students learn, establish, and maintain lifelong, healthy eating and activity patterns. Well-planned and effectively implemented school nutrition and fitness programs have been shown to enhance students' overall health, as well as their behavior and academic achievement in school. Staff wellness also is an integral part of a healthy school environment, since school staff can be daily role models for healthy behaviors.

Goal

All students in the Choctaw Tribal School System shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious food choices and enjoyable physical activity choices for a lifetime. All staff in the Choctaw Tribal School System School is encouraged to model healthful eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

To meet this goal, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians adopts this Choctaw Tribal School System Wellness Policy with the following commitments to nutrition, physical activity, comprehensive health education, marketing, and implementation. This policy is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources and to equitably serve the needs and interests of all students and staff, taking into consideration differences in culture.

The Choctaw Tribal School System will:

- Offer a school lunch program with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.
- Offer school breakfast and snack programs (where approved and applicable) with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the USDA and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.
- Encourage school staff and families to participate in school meal programs.
- Operate all Child Nutrition Programs with school foodservice staff who are properly qualified according to current professional standards (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code EE-2E)
- Establish food safety as a key component of all school food operations and ensure that the food service permit is current for the Food Service school site.
- Follow State Board of Education policies on competitive foods and extra food sales (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code EEH).
- Establish guidelines for all foods available on the school campus during the school day with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.

Commitment to Physical Activity

The Choctaw Tribal School System will:

- Provide physical education for all students (In accordance with Section 37-13-134, Mississippi Code of 1972, ann.).
- Kindergarten students will participate in physical activity for a minimum of 40 minutes during the school day. The 40 minutes does not have to take place continuously. This time should be used to help the child increase the skills involved in physical coordination (Kindergarten Guidelines).
- Offer a planned sequential program of physical education instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student centered and taught in a positive environment.
- Implement the 2006 Mississippi Physical Education Framework.

Commitment to Comprehensive Health Education

The Choctaw Tribal School System will:

- Provide ½ Carnegie unit of comprehensive health education for graduation (2004 Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard 20, Appendix A).
- Implement the 2006 Mississippi Comprehensive Health Framework for grades 9-12 (2004 Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard 20, Appendix A).

Commitment to Marketing a Healthy School Environment

The Choctaw Tribal School System will:

- Provide positive, motivating messages, both verbal and non-verbal, about healthy lifestyle practices throughout the school setting. All school personnel will help reinforce these messages.
- Involve students in planning for a healthy school environment. Students will be asked for input and feedback through the use of student surveys, and attention will be given to their comments.
- Promote healthful eating, physical activity, and healthy lifestyles to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community at school events (e.g., school registration, parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings, open houses, health fairs, teacher in-services, and other events).
- Eliminate advertising and materials at the school that promote foods of minimal nutrition value.
- Work with local media, like newspaper, TV and radio, to inform the community about the health problems facing Choctaw children, as well as the need for and benefits of healthy school environment.

Commitment to Implementation

The Choctaw Tribal School System School will:

- Establish a plan for implementation of the school wellness policy.
- Designate one or more persons to insure that the school wellness policy is implemented as written.

Emergency Health Issues

All accidents involving a person or property should be reported to the teacher in charge and the principal. The school will call 911 for an ambulance if a student needs emergency medical attention during school hours. If an accident is not life threatening, but needs a doctor's treatment, the school may transport student for doctor's care. Parents will be notified as soon as possible. If parents cannot be notified immediately, the school will contact those individuals designated by the parent to be contacted in case of an emergency. Parents will be required to sign medical release forms for the child to be treated in a hospital.

Non-Emergency Health Issues

In a non-emergency situation, when a child becomes ill at school, proper attention will be given and parents notified. Only medications for which proper identification, instructions for

dispensing of, and written parental consent are obtained will be given to children. Anti-tuberculosis medications will be given in school in accordance with the Mississippi State Board of Health guidelines. School personnel, with the exception of a registered school nurse, may not exceed the practice of first aid in dealing with pupil injuries and sickness. School staff should not attempt first aid, nor any other procedures for which they have not been trained.

Family Planning (Abstinence-based)

Abstinence-based education will be delivered through prevention education classes and be the main focus of prevention efforts related to teaching students about health and safety related to sexuality. Pregnancy and family planning services will be available to all students. Each student in grades 5-12 will receive at least one (1) hour of health education pertaining to pregnancy prevention and sexually transmitted diseases (STD's), including, but not limited to, HIV/AIDS. This health education will be provided by the school nurse or his or her designee. If parents elect for their child to NOT participate in these trainings they must indicate so on the student enrollment forms.

Sexual Transmitted Diseases

Under conditions allowed by federal and state laws, health professionals can provide treatment services for sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) to students without parental consent. Under these conditions, school officials may release students to Choctaw Health Center professionals, provided written documentation of the authority under which the student can be released is provided to the school, and the health professional signs a statement accepting responsibility for the student.

Head Lice and Scabies

Near the beginning of the school year, and as needed, children in the elementary schools will be screened by either classroom teachers, school staff members, or trained tribal employees for the presence of head lice and scabies (whenever one child in the class is identified, all will be checked). Educational information and related school procedures concerning the control of head lice and scabies will be provided following these screenings.

- A student found to be infested with head lice will be sent home as soon as possible with proper treatment and information.
- Upon return to school, students will be examined by the school nurse (or designated personnel) to ensure that proper treatment was performed and was effective. If the examination's results are unacceptable, the student will be again sent home until satisfactory results are obtained.
- When a student is sent home because of head lice or scabies, only the first day's absences may be counted as "excused;" all other days absent for this cause are "unexcused."
- If a student's head lice problem cannot be solved through the above steps, the community health center nurse will be notified. If the problem continues, Children and Family Services will be notified.

Because of the serious nature of lice on one child infesting another child, the above guidelines will be strictly enforced.

J. EXTRACURRICULAR & INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES

As the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians promotes positive social involvement, wellness, and improved health for all Choctaw people, students are encouraged to participate in the various

extracurricular activities and inter-scholastic athletic programs of the school. Students who participate in extracurricular activities must remember that they are role models for other students. High standards of behavior are expected of all participants. Students may be removed from participation due to behavioral misconduct.

Sportsmanship

Students who are spectators at athletic events are subject to the same rules that are observed in school and owe the athletes every consideration and respect possible. Students should refrain from the use of abusive language and inconsiderate treatment to visiting athletes and officials. Any unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of the spectators may result in probation for the school.

Attendance Requirements

Students participating in activities (such as sports, band, cheerleading, spring festivals) are required to attend classes on the day of the activity. Approved school activities allow for the school to count the student present. Such activities may include field trips, athletic contests, student conventions, musical festivals, science fairs, academic competitions, and similar activities. These times away from school do not count toward a student's number of absences for the semester or year. Students are given opportunity to make up all work in the same time frame as classmates. If work is not made up in a timely manner, the teacher must assign a "zero" for incomplete work.

7th and 8th Grade Athletics

As the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians promotes positive social involvement, wellness, and improved health for all Choctaw people, students are encouraged to participate in the various extracurricular activities and interscholastic athletic programs of the school. Students who participate in extracurricular activities must remember that they are role models for other students. High standards of behavior are expected of all participants. Students may be limited from participating in and attending activities based on their behavior and actions.

The Tribal School system will not participate in activities that require any student to miss more than (20) twenty class periods or have more than (5) five planned absences in the same class period in courses for which grades and/or units of credit are issued during the school year.

Students must not have been given any special inducement of any kind to attend a school to play on an athletic team. A student must present, from a physician, a statement of physical fitness for athletic competition. A pregnant student will be ineligible to participate in a MHSAA sponsored activity or its equivalent due to health and safety concerns. Following the pregnancy and with appropriate medical documentation the student may resume participation in MHSAA sponsored activities or their equivalent.

Students must meet the following criteria established by the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA):

To be eligible for participation as a seventh grader, a student must be promoted from sixth grade, and for participation as an eighth grader a student must be promoted from seventh grade. A pupil must have passed the 4 core courses (English, math, science and social studies). The average of these 4 core courses must be a "C" or above. For spring semester eligibility, the average of the 4 core courses must be a "C" or above.

Pupils in the seventh and eighth grades participating in high school extracurricular activities must pass their grade level by achieving at least an average of “C” in the four core courses of math, science, English, and social studies the previous year in order to be eligible to participate during the present year.

Middle School Football

Any 7th or 8th grade student who wishes to play middle school football must be enrolled at Choctaw Central Middle School. Parent of students from outlying schools who intend to play football should work with the Registrar’s office to request an out of boundary waiver. After football season is completed, students may choose to return to their home school or remain at Choctaw Central Middle School. It is strongly recommended that players enroll in the dormitory program during season.

American Indian Day/Week Celebration

- Students who are interested in participating in the pageant must be cleared through the counselor and principal’s office based on their grades, behavior and school participation.
- Parent/Guardian permission forms (with rules about the pageant) must be signed before a student can be voted on or participate in contests/pageants/dress reviews.
- Each homeroom class will vote on the selection of one boy and one girl to represent their class. The student with the most votes will represent the class in the pageant.
- Parents/Guardians must notify the school if they do not want their child to participate in programs.
- Participants must not be tardy or have check-outs on the day of the activity.
- It is the responsibility of parents/ guardians to provide items such as dress, shirt, and accessories.
- All decorating will be done by volunteers from Parents/Guardians and Teacher Assistants.
- Contestants for pageants/contests/ reviews and similar activities must arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the event or they will be disqualified from participation.
- No fee can be charged for participation in any American Indian Day/Week activity.
- Brave/Princess winners are ineligible to compete the following year.
- All Judges’ decisions will be considered final.
- Braves/Princesses should serve as Ambassadors for their local schools and must maintain a positive status related to academics, behavior and school participation. In cases where a student does not follow the school rules, the first runner-up will replace the Brave or Princess with the individual being required to relinquish their crown and title.

Homecoming Royalty Selection

- Sponsors in charge of Homecoming Activities will notify the appropriate elementary school of the deadlines and guidelines for selection of the Crown Bearer and Flower Girl.
- Students must have a good academic and disciplinary record and have approval from the parent/guardian to participate.
- The designated elementary school will select a first grade boy to be Crown Bearer and a first grade girl to be Flower Girl.
- It is the responsibility of the child’s parents/guardians to arrange transportation to and from Homecoming practices and to provide the dress, suit, and accessories for this event. The following schedule will be used to rotate the selection of Crown Bearer and Flower Girl through the elementary schools:
 - 2019 – Conehatta Elementary
 - 2020 – Red Water Elementary

2021 – Standing Pine Elementary
2022 – Tucker Elementary
2023 – Pearl River Elementary
2024 – Bogue Chitto Elementary

Field Trips

Class trips and field trips can be a good learning experience for students, parents and teachers; however, all school related trips must be well planned in advance and related to the academic or extracurricular activities of the school. Additionally, the following must occur before students are taken away from campus:

- The proposed activity and plans for adequate transportation, supervision and resources must be approved by the school principal.
- Parents must be fully informed of the purpose of the trip and of all planned activities. Written permission for student participation as well as provisions to provide emergency medical treatment, if necessary, must be received from the child's parent or guardian before a student will be allowed to take part in these activities.

NAYO Events

The Choctaw Tribal Schools will not schedule or participate in any softball/baseball or other MHSAA activities from Thursday through Monday of Easter weekend. In order to receive an excused absence, students must have good attendance and receive prior approval to miss school for attending NAYO events.

Fund-Raising

All fund-raising activities conducted on school property must have the prior approval of the school principal who will be responsible for ensuring that all student activity accounts are properly administered through the tribal centralized accounting system. All funds received by the school must be IMMEDIATELY deposited at MBCI finance department. The MBCI Office of Finance and Accounting will maintain custody of all funds. Only fund raising activities sponsored by the school or school-related student/parent organizations may be conducted on school property. All fund-raising activities involving the sale of food items must be conducted in accordance with the Choctaw Tribal School System's Wellness Policy.

All funds raised by the individual members of a group become the property of the group. Individual students have no claim to funds except for group participation expenses. No student may expect any refund in the event that he or she cannot participate in the group activity. Generally, these funds may be redistributed to students only. These funds may not be provided to staff members, chaperones, or group sponsors for any reason other than lodging or per diem expenses.

All groups raising funds for any reasons are required to have a parent meeting prior to beginning fund-raising in which all policies and guidelines are thoroughly explained. Parents will sign a form at this meeting indicating their understanding of fund-raising policies.

Student Birthday Parties

Schools may arrange monthly birthday parties for all students whose birthdays fall in a given month (or time period). The parties must be held during the time of the After School Program. No birthday parties may be held during instructional hours; parents may not send refreshments, party favors, gifts, or decorations for a party.

Deliveries at Schools

Schools will not accept deliveries of flowers, candy, gifts, and other such items at any time.

Officially Approved School Clubs and Student Organizations

To become an officially approved club, a *Choctaw Tribal Schools – Application to Establish Class and Club Account* must be completed and filed with the school principal. The application requires that a statement of purpose of the organization be completed, a proposed staff sponsor(s) named, and fundraising information listed. Once the completed application has been received it will be reviewed by the school principal and forwarded to the Choctaw Tribal Schools district office for district level approval by the School Business Manager, the Director of Schools, and the Director of Education. The application is then presented to the Education Committee and the Tribal Chief for review and final approval. Intercom announcements, fundraising, campus events, and on-campus advertisements/notices are limited to officially approved extracurricular clubs, classes, and sports teams of the school as well as tribally recognized entities and community partners. Applications are available in the Principal's office.

Jr. Beta Club Eligibility

The following policy is for all Choctaw Tribal Elementary Schools and Middle School:

- Students must have a grade of 86 or higher in each subject
- New inductees must have a first nine weeks average of 86 or higher in each subject.
- All clubs will have an induction ceremony in November of each year.
- Returning members must have a nine weeks average of 86 or higher in each subject.
- If a returning member has a first nine weeks grade below 86, they are put on probation and must bring their grade up to an 86 or higher by the end of the second nine weeks to maintain their membership.
- If this does not happen, that student will lose membership in the Beta Club for the remainder of the school year, but with the required grades, they are eligible for membership in the next school year.
- Behavior:
 - Beta members shall lose membership to the club for either of the following:
 - Beta members shall have no more than 2 office referrals per year
 - Beta members shall have no suspensions

Students who are members in good standing are eligible to attend the annual Jr. Beta State Convention. Students who place first, second, or third in the State Convention competitions are eligible to attend the National Jr. Beta Convention; however, the Choctaw Tribal School District will only pay the registration and travel expenses for first place winners. Second and third place winners are eligible to attend the National Convention, but are responsible for their own travel expenses.

K. SCHOOL SAFETY

School Visitors

All visitors must report to the main office and sign in. Unknown visitors will be required to provide photo identification.

Adults: All parents and adult family members are encouraged to visit the school and to be actively involved in their children's education. All visitors shall obtain permission and a Campus Pass from the principal before entering a class. Adult visitors are certainly welcome

in our school since visitation usually expresses wholesome interest in our efforts to maintain a quality program. It is understood that intended visits should be cleared in the principal's office so that proper protocol is followed. Spontaneous visits often prevent our staff from helping to make the visit meaningful and enjoyable. Volunteer Service Applications may be required for visitors who work with student groups and/or activities. Volunteers would be subject to a background investigation.

The Choctaw Tribal School System encourages parents/guardians, family and community members to visit schools when appropriate and to become approved volunteers for the system.

A "Visitor" is defined as any person on Tribal School property who 1) is not a current Choctaw Tribal School System employee who is authorized to be on the property and 2) has not been certified as a Volunteer by the MBCI Background Adjudication Office. Visitors to the school must report to the office unless the reason for the visit is to attend an athletic event or another after-school event where visitors are invited. During the school day when children are present, visitors must be issued a visitor badge by school staff that will be displayed at all times during the visit. Visitors, including school vendors, will be accompanied during the entire duration of the visit by a Tribal School System employee. Visitors are only allowed to use single occupant restrooms.

A "Volunteer" is defined as any person on Tribal School property who 1) is not a current Choctaw Tribal School System employee who is authorized to be on the property and 2) who has been certified as an approved Volunteer by the MBCI Background Adjudication Office after the required tribal, state and federal background checks. Volunteers to the school must report to the office and will be issued a volunteer badge that will be displayed at all times when they are volunteering. Persons interested in becoming an approved volunteer should contact the local school Principal to obtain an application form and background check list which must be completed and approved before one may serve as a volunteer in the schools. Since the background application and approval process is extensive and could take several months to complete, interested individuals are encouraged to apply well in advance. Volunteers are only allowed to use single occupant restrooms.

Students: Students not enrolled in the Choctaw Tribal Schools are not authorized to visit during the school day unless it is for a specific purpose and has been approved by the school principal. For any such approved visits, students must follow a pre-arranged schedule.

Non-School Persons: All staff must instruct students that under no circumstances are any non-school persons allowed into the building unless a teacher has been given directives when the person has an approved pass or is a part of a rescue team. All parents/guardians and other visitors must enter by the front door.

Loitering by students or visitors in the parking lots – including in vehicles – is not permitted. Once a student has arrived on the school premises, he or she is not to "socialize" with any person who is not a student or staff member at the school without permission from the principal's office. Socialize means to talk to, get in the car with, or accept food and drinks from.

Hall Passes

Students should obtain hall passes when they are required to be in hallways without their teacher. Teachers should note the time a student obtained the pass and the location to which they are going. School staff will be required to monitor all hallways during the day for appropriate student passes. The safety and security of our students is a high priority.

Bathroom Areas

Students should be supervised by an adult during any restroom break. If a student needs to go to the restroom during classroom time, meal time or other unscheduled restroom breaks, an adult must escort the student there and back.

Violence Response

At any Choctaw Tribal School we strive to have a safe and violent-free campus. This includes bullying and intimidation of any kind. When physical contact is witnessed between students and/or staff that results in injury of a person, the principal will contact the Department of Public Safety. School Security Officers shall act as “first responders” and make the scene safe by separating parties as soon as possible, according to training received. Charges will be filed to the court by the school for any disruptive incidents witnessed by school staff related to violence.

Violent acts witnessed by any person should be reported to a reliable adult. In the case of wanting to remain anonymous, students may report acts of violence on the Choctaw Tribal School web site or WeTip.com as listed on the tribes webpage (call 855-4-THE-REZ). Every incident reported will be investigated.

Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention Policy

The Choctaw Tribal School System does not condone and will not tolerate bullying or harassing behavior at school. Bullying or harassing behavior is any pattern or gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic that (a) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property, or (b) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits. A “hostile environment” means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior.

Bullying or harassing behavior will not be condoned or tolerated when it takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or when it takes place off school property when such conduct, in the determination of the school principal or Director of Schools, renders the offending person’s presence in the classroom a disruption to the education environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the students and teachers.

Reporting and Response: Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying or anyone with knowledge that a student or school employee has been subjected to bullying or harassing behavior, shall report the alleged acts in writing immediately to a school official. A student may report bullying anonymously taking into account that the school’s ability to take action based only on an anonymous report, may be limited. Reports should be made promptly but no later than five calendar (5) days after the alleged act or acts occurred. The complaint will

be investigated promptly with parents being notified of the nature of any complaint involving their student.

Any individual found to inappropriately possess, distribute, misuse/abuse any prescription or non-prescription drug shall be subject to the same discipline measures.

Internet Safety

Under the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Choctaw Tribal Schools provide training to students on internet safety. Our network administrator filters controversial, obscene and/or harmful material found on the internet. Schools are required to certify that they educate minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with others on social networking websites. Schools are required to educate students on cyberbullying awareness and response. CTS is committed to protecting personally identifiable information and will not publish names of students on any internet based platform.

Safety Inspections

When a principal or the principal's designee has reasonable suspicion to believe that any item prohibited by school policy, rules, or tribal or federal law is on school property, that official may search lockers, desks, personal property, and/or persons for that item. To ensure a safe school environment for all students and staff, a metal detector will be used at least monthly in random and unannounced searches, and more often as need determines. Throughout the year, there will be occasional and unannounced inspections by a law enforcement agency's drug detection dog. Campus security officers will assist the school principal in completion of all safety inspections, searches, and other duties as assigned by the principal to ensure that the campus is a safe environment conducive to learning.

Gangs

Students on tribal school property, on the way to or from school, or at any school-sponsored activity shall not conduct themselves in any manner, whether in appearance or behavior, that demonstrates their affiliation with any gang.

Notice of the Presence of Asbestos Containing Material (ACM)

On accordance with 40 CFR Part 763.93(g)(4), the campuses of Bogue Chitto Elementary School, Conehatta Elementary School, Pearl River Elementary School, Red Water Elementary School, Standing Pine Elementary School, and Tucker Elementary School have been certified as asbestos-free. However, the campuses of Choctaw Central High School and Choctaw Central Middle School have areas of asbestos which have been abated and posted. Concerned individuals should contact these schools to review the respective schools' asbestos management plans.

Child Protection Reporting Policy

Pursuant to federal mandatory reporter laws, all school personnel are mandated reporters and are individually responsible for making reports of suspected abuse or neglect. Any persons, including specialists providing services to students under contract, subcontract or grant, shall report suspected abuse or neglect. Reporting procedures are as follows:

- (a) All suspected cases of child abuse/neglect shall be reported to the principal, assistant principal or guidance counselor. The assistant principal or counselor shall report immediately to the principal.
- (b) An appropriate administrative official, counselor or school nurse shall make immediate notification, by telephone, to the Tribe's Department of Public Safety to initiate the

reporting protocol and to receive further instruction from law enforcement. In the event that law enforcement instructs the school to contact the Tribe's Department of Children and Family Services ("CFS"), the school official must immediately call CFS. Otherwise, law enforcement will be responsible for initiating a call to CFS. Law enforcement and/or CFS personnel will conduct an in-school conference with any child who has been reported for suspected abuse/neglect.

- (c) Immediately after the response from law enforcement and/or CFS, the person(s) responsible for receiving the initial information concerning the alleged abuse/neglect shall complete an *Indian Child Protection Referral* form. (See the forms section of the CTS Staff Handbook.)
- (d) The ICPR form shall be routed according to the instructions on the form and in accordance with the mandatory reporter training that has been provided by the Attorney General's office. The form must be submitted less than 24 hours after the initial report of the incident. No forms shall be withheld due to the absence of any administrative school personnel, nor shall any administrative personnel withhold the submission of any form to the appropriate reporting agencies.
- (e) Delivery of the ICPR form shall be preferably made by in-person delivery to the reporting agencies. The ICPR form should be maintained in a confidential envelope at all times until delivered.
- (f) School personnel are prohibited from discussing any incidents of reported abuse/neglect except with those designated administrative personnel, law enforcement, CFS or the Attorney General's office.

The law provides that the identity of any person making a report shall not be disclosed without the consent of the person making the report. Anonymous reporting can also be made through the following hotline number: **Bureau of Indian Affairs National Child Abuse Prevention Hotline 1-800-633-5155**

This policy applies to all schools and programs within the Choctaw Tribal School System.

If you have information about Theft, Child Abuse, Vandalism, Illegal Drugs, Bullying, Assault, or any other illegal activity call 855-4-THE-REZ or go to wetip.com.

L. EMERGENCY PLANS

School Closure

There may be days that weather conditions will not permit schools to be open. On these occasions the Office of the Tribal Chief and the Director of Education will make the decision as to whether or not to close school. Announcements of school closings will be made on the local radio and television stations. Additional postings may also be posted on the school messenger system and school web pages.

On the days that weather conditions change for the worse after students are in school, the Office of the Tribal Chief will make the decision to close schools. Every effort will be made to contact parents before students are transported home.

Weather Drills

Tornado or severe weather (notification by intercom): a tornado watch means weather conditions are favorable for a tornado. A tornado warning means one has been spotted. ALL

students are to be moved to a school hall. While in the halls, the pupils are to be seated near the walls with their knees brought up to the sides of the head. If students are between classes when an alert is sounded, they should report to the nearest hallway.

Fire & Other Emergency Drills

Fire, explosion, and bomb threat: In case of fire, students are immediately instructed to go to a designated area, under the supervision of the teacher, away from the building. All windows are to be closed and the door is to be closed on the way out of the classroom. Students are to proceed in an orderly yet rapid manner to the designated area. No student is to open a locker for any reason. In case of explosion, students will be directed out of the building to a safe place. First aid will be administered as needed.

Lock Down Drills

Lock Down drills will be conducted four times a year according to the following procedure:

1. Lock all exterior doors
2. Lock all interior doors
3. Assign staff to secure specified and pre-arranged areas; monitor conditions
4. Recognize need and be ready for contingencies
5. Turn off gas, water, and electricity immediately if directed to do so
6. Always send two people for initial assignment

Daily Lock Down procedures:

1. All exterior doors, except the front entrance, must be locked at all times
2. All interior rooms must be locked when vacant. Teachers must lock the class room when at recess or lunch.
3. All teachers must have a key to the classroom and to the nearest exterior door.
4. Students are not allowed to unlock doors or to stay in a classroom without an adult present.
5. All closets and storage areas must be locked at all times.

Emergency Plans & COOP

Each school must follow the provisions of its Emergency Management Plan and the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP Plan) which is on file at the school office and at Tribal Schools Maintenance. To account for the safety and well-being of all students, teachers should take their roll books and check roll immediately upon reaching the designated area.

M. STUDENT AND FAMILY RIGHTS

School Prayer

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and the Choctaw Tribal School System condone voluntary prayer and meditation in the Choctaw Tribal Schools. Prayers and meditations shall be strictly voluntary, and no students shall be required to participate.

Due Process Proceedings

The following student rights and requirements for due process are required by 25 CFR Part 42.

Rights of the Individual Student

Individual students at BIE funded schools have, and shall be accorded, the following rights:

- The right to an education.

- The right to be free from unreasonable search and seizure of their person, to a safe and secure environment and property, and to a reasonable degree of privacy. (The school retains the right to disseminate to the media pictures and/or information concerning students unless a student's parent or guardian requests in writing to the principal that such information not be released.)
- The right to make his or her own decisions where applicable.
- The right to freedom of religion and culture.
- The right to freedom of speech and expression, including symbolic expression, such as display of buttons, posters, choice of dress, and length of hair, so long as the symbolic expression does not unreasonably and in fact disrupt the educational process or endanger the health and safety of the student or others as long as it does not violate the school dress code.
- The right to freedom of the press, except where material in student publications is libelous, slanderous, or obscene.
- The right to peaceably assemble and to petition the redress of grievances.
- The right to freedom from discrimination.
- The right to due process. Every student is entitled to due process in every instance of disciplinary action for alleged violation of school regulations for which the student may be subjected to penalties of suspension, expulsion, or transfer.
- The right to have an anonymous means with which to report situations in which they themselves or other students have been abused in any manner (at school or away from school). Each case will be investigated. The BIA National Child Abuse Prevention Hotline is 1-800-663-5155.

Principals and Teachers will carefully adhere to all Due Process procedures and will investigate every incident to ensure that victims and innocent students are not punished /disciplined as if they were violators of school rules. It is unfair and unjust to dispense equal punishment for unequal offenses.

Due Process for Suspension

Suspension is defined as any exclusion from school of a student not exceeding ten (10) days.

- No suspension will be made without giving the student an **informal hearing** by the principal. This will include a review of the charges and an opportunity for the student to present his or her version of what happened.
- The parents/guardians of the student are to be notified by phone call or in person of the suspension and the school shall mail the notification of the suspension, the notice being mailed within twenty-four (24) hours of the suspension. In addition, a school official must document all attempts made by phone or home visit to notify the parent/guardian of the suspension.

Due Process for Suspension Ten (10) days or more or for Expulsion

Expulsion is defined as any exclusion from school of a student in excess of ten (10) days.

- Written notice of charges within a reasonable time prior to a hearing. Notice of the charges shall include reference to the regulation allegedly violated, the facts alleged to constitute the violation, and notice of access to all statements of persons relating to the charge and to those parts of the student's school record which will be considered in rendering a disciplinary decision.

- A fair and impartial hearing will be granted the student prior to the imposition of disciplinary action, absent the actual existence of an emergency situation seriously and immediately endangering the health or safety of the student or others. In an emergency situation the official may impose disciplinary action not to exceed a temporary suspension, but shall immediately thereafter report in writing the facts (not conclusions) giving rise to the emergency and shall afford the student a hearing which fully comports with due process, as set forth herein, as soon as practicable thereafter.
- A student may appeal an expulsion through the following levels: (1) the Director of Schools, (2) the Director of Education, (3) the Tribal Chief.
- The student has the right to the following:
 - To have present at the hearing the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) (or their designee) and to be represented by lay or legal counsel of the student's choice. Private attorney's fees are to be borne by the student.
 - To produce, and have produced, witnesses on the student's behalf and to confront and examine all witnesses.
 - A record of hearings of disciplinary actions, including written statements of fact and conclusions in all cases of disciplinary action.
- The student shall not be compelled to testify against him or herself.
- The student has the right to have all allegations of misconduct and information pertaining thereto expunged from the school record in the event the student is found not guilty of the charges.
- Students who have been expelled from other school districts must complete their expulsion prior to being accepted into the Choctaw Tribal School district.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and the Choctaw Tribal School System does not discriminate in policies, procedures, employment, admissions, or eligibility for class or program participation on the basis of race or racial heritage, color, national origin, religion, gender, or disability in violation of the law.

However, in accordance with federal law, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians adheres to a publicly announced policy and practice of extending preferential treatment to qualified Indians in regard to employment. Additionally, student enrollment in the Choctaw Tribal School System is limited to children who hold a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood which certifies one-fourth or more Indian ancestry, according to Title 25 of the Code of Federal Regulations in Part 31.

All students shall be guaranteed equal access to all school programs, courses, services, and extra-curricular activities regardless of gender or disability.

Any employee complaints of discrimination shall be handled in accordance with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Administrative Personnel Policy entitled "Grievance."

Student or parent/guardian complaints of discrimination may be filed according to the procedures described elsewhere in this handbook.

Family Educational Rights & Privacy

The Choctaw Tribal School System is in compliance with provisions granted under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy of 1974, and confidentiality law under Public Law 94-142. Under these laws the parents of students enrolled in any educational institution receiving federal funds are given certain rights concerning the school records of their children. The following rights are accorded you under the act:

1. You are entitled to have access to your child's school records upon request. The request should be directed to the building principal.
2. You are entitled to inspect and review the contents of your child's school records, and to challenge the contents if you feel they are inaccurate, misleading, in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student, or if they contain inappropriate data.
3. Before any school records will be released to third parties (colleges, potential employers, etc.) who have requested copies of your child's school records, the school must have your written consent, or the written consent of the student who is 18 years of age or older.
4. Upon receipt of a subpoena or judicial order requiring the principal to relinquish control of your child's record, you will be notified of the subpoena or judicial order before the principal will relinquish control of the records.
5. Whenever your child enrolls in another elementary or secondary school outside this district, you will be notified of the transfer of the record.
6. The school assures that it will provide for the legal access and safe keeping of such records in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and Public Law 94-142 by providing fireproof and locked files for your child's records.
7. The law allows "directory information" about students to be made public without specific permission from parents. You are entitled, however, to request the deletion of certain information about your child from school directories.
8. The school will maintain a list containing the signature, the date, and the reason for all persons receiving access to your child's records. The law, however, allows school officials, including your child's teacher to have access to school records without signature. You are entitled to have access to this list.
9. When your child becomes eighteen (18) years of age, the rights formerly accorded to you as a parent with respect to school records will become the sole rights of the student.

If you have questions concerning the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, you should call the principal of your community school.

Parent and Community Members 'Right to Know' Notification

Staff members from all the Choctaw Tribal Schools want to provide you with needed information about your school, its programs and progress. If you need more information from the school related to school topics or programs, please contact your local school principal. If you would like to schedule a meeting, you may call your local school to set up and appointment. An interpreter will be provided if requested. Some common topics include the following:

- Educational qualifications of your child's teacher and paraprofessional
- Understanding the Choctaw Tribal Schools / Mississippi Curriculum: Reading, Math, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies or State Standards
- Language Assessment Test: Reading, Writing and Oral Scores (PreK)
- Understanding the Choctaw Language and Culture Standards
- State Assessment, Language Arts & Mathematics: , MAAP Grades 3rd – 8th
- State Assessment, Science Test: MS MAAP-Science Assessment Grades 5th and 8th
- Choctaw Central High, ACT assessments
- District Assessment, Nine-week tests & Standards Mastery
- Annual School Report Card / (Measures Progress of the School)
- District support services, Tutorial services, counseling
- Technology resources, school web-page, parent portal log-in
- After School Program
- Exceptional Education services (Special Education and Talented / Gifted)
- Library/Media resources
- Transportation
- Emergency & Safety plan
- Nursing, Behavioral & mental health support
- Referrals for services outside of school
- Other items of interest not listed

We want to work with you so that the Choctaw Tribal Schools can continue to be an excellent place for your child to learn. You can circle items of interest, tear out this page, sign the page and send to the school. We will be glad to get back in touch with you on these items. You can also visit us on the district web-site at www.choctawtribalschools.com or stop by your local school for more information.

School – Home Compact

Because we believe that the education of every student must be a partnership between the school and the home, we today make this compact to demonstrate our acceptance of our shared responsibilities. By the school's presentation of this compact in this handbook and by the student's and parent/guardian's signatures on the agreement form, we hold ourselves accountable to each other to do our very best in providing an educational system and a home environment that will promote learning and achievement.

The school agrees to the following:

- to provide high quality curriculum and teaching
- to demonstrate high expectations of all students
- to maintain a supportive and safe learning environment
- to offer individual parent-teacher conferences at least once a year
- to provide frequent reports on student progress, in addition to regular report cards

- to welcome parents as visitors, observers, or volunteers in reasonable settings
- to offer a variety of parent meetings each year, with childcare provided

Parents and Guardians agree to the following:

- to encourage and monitor regular school attendance
 - to encourage and monitor the completion of homework and other assignments
 - to monitor the child's rest, encouraging healthy patterns of sleep
 - to monitor television viewing, establishing appropriate limits
 - to encourage positive use of extracurricular time
 - to volunteer, if possible, to help in school class or extracurricular events
 - to attend parent meetings whenever possible
-

