

Merrimack School District



Thorntons Ferry Elementary School Student Handbook

(for Parent & Student Review)

2025-2026

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit #26
36 McElwain Street
Merrimack, New Hampshire 03054
Tel. (603) 424-6200 Fax(603) 424-6229

DR. KATHLEEN SCHOLAND
*Interim Assistant Superintendent
for Curriculum*

EVERETT V. OLSEN JR.
Chief Educational Officer

MATTHEW D. SHEVENELL
Assistant Superintendent for Business

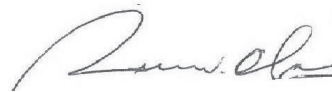
August 28, 2025

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We hope that this booklet provides parents and guardians with information which will be helpful to you. The staff looks forward to working cooperatively with you this year to provide a positive and meaningful learning experience for your child.

This booklet was developed to assist you in becoming more knowledgeable about the day-to-day operations and the policies and procedures that are pertinent to the students' well-being.

Sincerely,



Everett V. Olsen, Jr.
Chief Educational Officer

MERRIMACK SCHOOL BOARD

Lori Peters, Chair	lori.peters@sau26.org.....	603-440-5326
Laurie Rothhaus, Vice Chair	laurie.rothhaus@sau26.org.....	603-315-8671
Naomi Halter.....	naomi.halter@sau26.org	603-566-3030
Jenna Hardy	jenna.hardy@sau26.org	603-682-9696
Rachel Paepke	rachel.paepke@sau26.org.....	603-569-7948
TBD.....	MHS Student Representative	

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

<i>Chief Educational Officer</i>	
Everett V. Olsen, Jr	424-6200
<i>Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment</i>	
Dr. Kathleen Scholand	424-6200
<i>Assistant Superintendent for Business</i>	
Matthew Shevenell.....	424-6200
<i>Director of Human Resources</i>	
Melissa Fazlic	424-6200
<i>Director of Technology & Library Media Services</i>	
Jason Pelletier	424-6203
<i>Director of Student Services</i>	
Colleen Sliva.....	424-6211



Mission Statement



The Merrimack School District will provide a high quality, future-driven education to all students in the community. Students will engage in learning opportunities that reflect both rigor and relevance, along with meeting their cognitive, social, and emotional needs. The District will prepare students to understand, adapt, and adjust to civic, economic, social, and technological challenges in the world. Our overall goal is to inspire, create, and encourage students to be curious, connected, prepared, resilient, dedicated individuals that are lifelong, expert learners; Merrimack graduates exercise judgment, are innovative, and become responsible, contributing members of society.





Vision of a Learner

Merrimack School District



Curious

Learners wonder about and seek opportunities to explore the world around them and are open to new experiences. They listen, ask questions, and gather resources to build understanding. Learners are engaged, critical, and creative thinkers who solve problems and demonstrate understanding.



Connected

Learners are citizens of their school, community, state, and the world. They build positive relationships through the development and use of interpersonal, communication, and empathy skills. Learners consider and respect different perspectives, evaluate the impact of their actions, and demonstrate compassion for others.



Prepared

Learners engage in authentic learning experiences that prepare them with necessary and practical skills for everyday life, including digital and financial literacy. They learn to create and use a plan to guide their own academic, career, and social emotional development. Learners develop collaboration, communication, self-management, and decision making skills.



Resilient

Learners understand that risk taking and failure are part of the learning process, and perceive challenges as an opportunity for growth. They can use their knowledge about themselves to advocate for their needs and recognize when they need help. Learners develop and evaluate multiple ways to solve problems and complete tasks.



Dedicated

Learners seek to contribute to their local and global communities, giving their time and energy to pursue their goals. They are life-long learners who possess the self-worth and confidence to explore and champion their interests and passions, inspiring others to do the same. Learners persevere and collaborate to set and achieve meaningful goals.



Vision of a Graduate

Merrimack High School students engage in authentic learning that prepares them with necessary life skills to become independent as individuals and active participants as citizens upon graduation.



Mastricola Upper Elementary
Mastricola Elementary

Reeds Ferry Elementary
Thorntons Ferry Elementary

Merrimack High
Merrimack Middle

Merrimack High School

Vision of a Graduate



Merrimack High School students engage in authentic learning that prepares them with necessary life skills to become independent as individuals and active participants as citizens upon graduation.

Merrimack High School Graduates are Positive Community Members.

Graduates are effective creative and critical thinkers. They feel empowered to be leaders, to care about their self-worth, others, and their local and global community. This may be evidenced by being resilient, ethical, open-minded, confident, and flexible.

The Merrimack Graduate Will be Future Ready.

Graduates are driven to achieve their goals. The Merrimack graduate will take ownership of and responsibility for their choices and will continue to be self-directed, lifelong learners.

They have prepared for this by:

- Participating in a dynamic curriculum that aligns to the State and National Standards.
- Developing executive functioning skills
- Becoming digitally and financially literate.
- Developing communication skills in areas of listening, speaking and writing.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

James Mastricola Elementary School

Michelle Romein..... Principal
Kathleen Ortega Assistant Principal

Reeds Ferry School

Bonnie Painchaud Principal
Amy Gentile..... Assistant Principal

Thorntons Ferry School

Julie DeLuca Principal
Brooke Concannon..... Assistant Principal

Other

Bus Contractor Student Transportation of America
Bus Contractor Caring Hands (Special Services)
Richard Desmond..... Transportation Coordinator
David Dziki Food Services Director

School District policies can be found online at: www.sau26.org/page/5040

**Hard copy versions of School District policies are held at the SAU Office,
36 McElwain Street, Merrimack, NH 03054.**

**Please verify in PowerSchool that you have read and
reviewed the handbook with your student.**

Table of Contents

<u>Administrative Personnel</u>	
<u>Mission Statement</u>	
<u>Vision of a Learner</u>	
<u>Vision of a Graduate</u>	
<u>Elementary School Administration</u>	
<u>Table of Contents</u>	1
<u>Vision of Learner</u>	3
<u>Educational Services</u>	3
<u>Student Services</u>	3
<u>School Counseling</u>	3
<u>Literacy Coordinator</u>	3
<u>Title 1 Program</u>	3
<u>Library Services and Media</u>	3
<u>Unified Arts</u>	3
<u>Technology</u>	3
<u>Reporting Student Progress</u>	4
<u>Parent/Guardian-Educator Conferences</u>	4
<u>Report Cards</u>	4
<u>Homework</u>	4
<u>Student Assessments</u>	4
<u>Placement</u>	4
<u>Arrival and Dismissal</u>	4
<u>Transfer to Another School</u>	5
<u>Tardy</u>	5
<u>Supervision of Students</u>	5
<u>Health Services</u>	5
<u>General Information</u>	6
<u>School Insurance</u>	6
<u>School Cancellation</u>	6
<u>Delayed School Opening Policy</u>	6
<u>Emergency School Closing Procedures</u>	6
<u>Lost and Found</u>	6
<u>Lunch Program</u>	6
<u>Celebration Guidelines</u>	6
<u>Field Trips and Excursions</u>	7
<u>Parent/Guardian Groups</u>	7
<u>School Day Schedule</u>	7
<u>Emergency Telephone Calls</u>	7
<u>Visitors to the School</u>	7
<u>Moment of Silence</u>	7
<u>Letters/Notices Brought to School by Students</u>	8
<u>Religious Rights and Responsibilities</u>	8
<u>Student Dress</u>	8
<u>Play Items/Cell Phones/Electronic Devices Brought to School</u>	8

Table of Contents (continued)

<u>Homeless Policy and Situations</u>	8
<u>Educator Qualifications</u>	8
<u>Other Policies</u>	9
<u>Transportation</u>	10
<u>Bus Rules</u>	10
<u>Student Rules</u>	10
<u>Annual Notification of Rights Concerning Student Records and Directory Information</u>	11
<u>Directory Information/Publication of Student Information</u>	13
<u>Criteria for Publication of School-Related Material on the Internet</u>	13
<u>Student Behavior, Conduct, Discipline and Due Process</u>	14
<u>Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention - Bullying</u>	14
<u>Elementary Discipline Code</u>	14
<u>Elementary Schools, Merrimack Police Department, and Merrimack Youth Association</u>	16
<u>Additional School District Policies</u>	17
<u>Suicide Prevention and Response Policy and Plan</u>	17
<u>Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Grievance Process</u>	18
<u>Attendance</u>	18
<u>Childhood Diseases</u>	21
<u>Asbestos Management Plan Letter</u>	22
<u>School Calendar</u>	23

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Student Services

The district has a duty to ensure that every child who is suspected or known to be a child with a disability is referred for further evaluation. See Ed 1105.02(a). The Department of Student Services provides diagnostic, remedial, and consultative services for students who are identified with a disability. The Referral Review Team initially processes referrals and, if there is a recommendation for evaluation and subsequent identification under the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), a formal team meeting is held to design an Individual Education Plan. The district's disability-related programs are conducted in accordance with federal and state laws, including the provisions of IDEA and Section 504 of the Civil Rights Act. Students and parents/guardians interested in special education can refer to the school district's Procedural Safeguards Booklet for parents/guardians available from the Special Education Coordinators in each school or from Student Services at 424-6211.

Click here for the [link to the Evaluation Requirements for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities](#), here for the [District's policy on Special Education Regulations Evaluations](#), and here for [Evaluation Requirements for Students with Developmental Delays](#).

School Counseling

The school counselors and/or social and emotional learning (SEL) specialists at each elementary school assist each student with their academic, behavioral, and social/emotional needs. School Counselors and SEL Specialists collaborate closely with parents/guardians and school staff to ensure their child's success in the school setting. In addition to these responsibilities, the school counselors and SEL specialists also coordinate standardized testing, 504 plan development, teach classroom lessons, conduct small group counseling and individual counseling as requested by parents/guardians. [Here is the District's policy on school counseling.](#)

Literacy Coordinator

The Literacy Coordinator, along with the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment and school administration, is responsible for overseeing the English Language Arts curriculum, instruction and assessment processes for the District and each respective school. This includes developing and refining curriculum, assessments, instructional practices, assessments, and materials. The coordinators also support diagnostic placement testing for new students, review of student, grade level and school-wide data.

Title 1 Program

Title 1 is a federally funded program designed for participating students to improve their knowledge and skills necessary to meet literacy and math standards. Title 1 Tutors provide students with supplemental, small-group instruction in reading and mathematics. Students are selected for the program based on assessment data and educator recommendation. Please see the [Parent Involvement Policy for Title One](#).

Library Services and Media

The Merrimack School Library and Media Program offers all students access to the district's entire collection of print and non- print resources to support students' learning needs in all areas. Students shall learn how to find and use information, what resources are appropriate for use, how to conduct research and how to select resources for their learning.

Unified Arts

Each elementary school has full-time specialists in the areas of art, music, physical education, library and digital literacy, who meet with children in scheduled classes and/or within their classrooms. Unified Arts programming allows students to gain an understanding and knowledge of each specialty's standards and curriculum along with fostering student skills necessary for 21st Century Learning.

Technology

Each student has access to an ipad in grades K and first and to chromebooks in grades 2-4. At the lower elementary level, students are not allowed to bring their own devices. Here are the available [technology supports in our district](#) as well as the policy on [student usage of technology](#).

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Parent/Guardian-Educator Conferences

There are specified dates set aside for parent/guardian-educator conferences. Please see the district's school calendar for a list of dates/school. In addition to providing in-person conferences, educators shall also offer parents/guardians conferences via zoom or a phone. Educators will communicate directly with parents/guardians to coordinate times and a method for student conferences.

Report Cards

Report cards are sent home three times a year. Please see the [district calendar](#) for a listing of trimester dates and when report cards shall be sent home to parents/guardians. The standards-based report card reflects the essential learning competencies of all content areas as well as the Characteristics of a Successful Learner.

Homework

Homework is intended to support student learning by providing opportunities for practice based on the varied needs of students. It is designed by the educator to support learning and completion is the responsibility of the student. The full text of the [Homework Policy is here](#).

Student Assessments

Throughout the year, formative and standardized assessments will be administered to your child. These assessments assist us in planning and evaluating instruction and learning opportunities to meet the needs of our students. Parents/guardians, please make every effort to have your child attend school during when assessments are administered. Your child's classroom teacher will communicate with you to let you know the time periods for assessments. Pursuant to state law, parents/guardians have the right to opt out of state standardized testing. If any parent/guardian wishes to opt their child out, please notify the Principal/Assistant Principal in writing prior to the time of testing. [Click here for a recap of assessments and assessment scores for Merrimack](#). Tutoring is available after 10 consecutive days of absence and can be requested through administration and/or Merrimack's Student Services. For absences of shorter duration, make up work shall be sent home after the child returns to school.

PLACEMENT

It is a district practice that parents/guardians are not allowed to request specific teachers. Placement of your child/children is a complex process involving a number of factors including: academic and social and emotional/behavioral heterogeneity, balance of boys and girls, groupings for academic services, ensuring that each child has at least one student from his/her current class, and final teacher placement completed by administration. [The policy for placement can be accessed here](#). The decision of the building principal regarding student placement may be appealed to the Superintendent, and then to the School Board. The School Board shall give significant consideration to the principal's and Superintendent's recommended placement.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

To assure student safety, parents/guardians are asked to call their child in as absent by calling the school office or by entering the absence into School Dismissal Manager. A student is considered tardy after 8:35 and parents/guardians are required to sign their child in at the front office. For picking up your child early, please sign your child out in the front office. Contact your school's office to get more details as to when early dismissal stops. Early dismissal takes places only through the school office and occurs upon:

- Written request of the parent/guardian or notification by the school. In case of an emergency, a verbal request may be honored,
- when the destination and the person to whom the child is to be dismissed are known by the administration and approved by the Parent/Guardian.
- When suitable transportation to that destination is provided.

For arrival and dismissal procedures, please check your child's school's website or review other communications that are sent to parents/guardians at the beginning of the year. Please click here for the policy on [Student Release Precautions](#).

Transfer to Another School

If you anticipate moving out of your school's area or leaving Merrimack, please notify the school's office prior to your child moving and the school shall have you complete a form withdrawing your child and giving permission to release records to the new school.

Tardy

Students are considered tardy after 8:35 a.m. Parents/guardians are responsible for communicating their attendance to the school office. If your child arrives after 8:35, please walk your child in and sign them in the front office.

Supervision of Students

Educators are available at 8:15 for student arrival. Students will not be supervised at school if they arrive prior to 8:15 (unless they are enrolled in the Before School Program at each school). Once arrival ends at 8:35, there will be no staff available for car arrival. Please walk your child into the front office and sign them in as tardy.

HEALTH SERVICES

The goal of the school's health services is to advance the well-being, academic success, and safety of all students. School nurses shall provide support access to primary health care, provide a system for dealing with crisis medical situations, provide mandated screening and immunization monitoring, and provide a process for identification and resolution of students' health care needs that affect educational achievement.

The school nurse provides acute, chronic, episodic, and emergency health care. The school nurse assumes responsibility for appropriate assessment, planning, intervention, evaluation, management, and referral activities for students within the school. Health screening such as vision and hearing are conducted as necessary and as mandated by state and district policies. Individual Health Plans are formulated and implemented when needed. Immunizations and physical exams are reviewed. The school nurse monitors health and safety issues within the building, district, and community and acts as liaison between the physician, school, community, and home. Please inform the nurse of any special medical needs your child may have.

Permanent emergency contact information is maintained at each school for every child. Parents/guardians will notify the nurse of any change of telephone numbers for emergency contacts as well as changes in personal and work numbers. No medication shall be dispensed or administered to any child except by the school nurse, building principal and/or designee.

A physician's written order and a written parent/guardian release form shall be submitted by parents/guardians for prescription medication (the prescription label is not a substitute for the written physician's order).

Please do not send medicine to school with your child and bring all medication directly to the school (Office or Nurse). All medication will be brought directly to school and picked up by the parent/guardian. Any parent/guardian whose student is required to take medication during school hours will notify the school nurse and obtain information regarding the school policy. Please see District Policy below for more information on the district's medication administration policies. The school nurse or a designated administrator shall assist any student needing to take medication during the school day, except for self-administered medications permitted by District Policy and approved by the administration. Please see the following link for the [Policy on Administering Medication in schools](#).

Before medication can be administered in school, the school nurse must have a written order from your child's physician on file with the school health office.

- Signed written statement from the prescribing physician specifying the student's name, the name, route, and dosage of the medication, the frequency and time of medication administration, the date and duration of the order, and a diagnosis, if not a violation of confidentiality. This will be renewed each school year. If a change in medication, dosage, or time schedule is made, the prescribing physician must send another written statement outlining the changes.
- A signed, written request from the parent/guardian(s) of the student indicating his/her desire that the school assist the student in the matter set forth in the physician's statement. This statement will be accompanied by a "hold harmless" release signed by the parent/guardian(s)/guardian(s), as well as a list of all medications the student is currently receiving, if not a violation of confidentiality or contrary to the request of parent/guardian/student that such medication be documented.

- This request will include approval to have the school nurse designee administer the medication.
- When a medical condition warrants a change in the normal school routine, the parent/guardian, before sending his/her child to school, shall submit orders or a note from the treating physician that stipulates the change in school activities (e.g., recess, physical education etc.). New Hampshire state law requires our school nurse to maintain current records of immunizations. The district requires proof of all immunizations mandated under State regulations, Ed 311.01 and He-P 301.14, prior to the start of the school year. Exemptions for immunizations will be given consistent with RSA 141-C:20-c.

GENERAL INFORMATION

School Insurance

The school does not assume financial responsibility for the expense of medical and/or dental treatment required by students because of accidents while at school or going to or from school.

School Cancellation

The decision to cancel school shall be made and announced no later than 6:30 a.m. These announcements will be made on local radio stations and Channel 9-WMUR. In addition, the District's Automated Communication System may be incorporated.

Delayed School Opening Policy

The two-hour delayed school opening policy, if utilized during inclement weather, will be announced on various local television and radio stations. The district's Automated Calling System may be used to inform parents/guardians of delays. A delayed opening will mean that all bus transportation will be delayed for two hours and that the opening of school on that day will also be delayed by two hours. There will be no morning preschool when there is a delayed opening. The time for the closing of school at the end of the day on which a delayed opening is called shall remain the same.

Emergency School Closing Procedures

Parents/guardians shall be notified by the district's Automated Communication System of any emergency school closures. Please make sure your phone numbers and email addresses are kept current in PowerSchool and in other district's records. Additionally, all school closings will be announced over local television and radio stations.

It is the policy of the Merrimack School District to reserve the concept of a shortened school day for emergency situations. An emergency may include but is not limited to a loss of water pressure, heat, electricity, or inclement weather during the school day. When the entire school is dismissed early by authority of the superintendent and/or the school board, all attempts shall be made to notify parents/guardians through the media, Automated Communication System, and other available sources of public information. Parents/guardians who work, or are not at home, will decide on the care of their child when school is dismissed early.

Lost and Found

A lost and found area is kept in each school. Please stop by the school to check for lost articles. Identification is facilitated when clothing and other personal belongings are clearly marked with the child's name. Unclaimed lost and found articles are donated to local charities periodically.

Lunch Program

A hot lunch program is available in each elementary school. Lunch prices change from year to year. School lunch prices are announced at the beginning of each school year. Here is a link to the [District's Meal Charging Policy](#).

Celebration Guidelines

When planning celebrations:

- Consider both food and non-food ways to celebrate
- Provide healthy food options
- Limit the amount of food available
- Monitor portion sizes

School celebrations can be an opportunity to reinforce the nutrition knowledge learned in the classroom and be a time where students can practice and learn to make healthy choices. Celebrations are an occasion to consider food as a complement to the event. Please click on the link below for a full reading of the [Healthy Food Policy](#). Please contact your child's school for school based procedures around food in schools and birthday celebrations.

Field Trips and Excursions

The Merrimack School District encourages off-site educational experiences that expand the school curriculum and that also educate the whole child. Such experiences are viewed as class time in another location. It is the responsibility of each Principal to assure that such student experiences are thoroughly planned in the interest and protection of the pupils involved and that the behavioral expectations are the same as in the classroom. Educational alternatives will be provided to students who do not attend a field trip.

The Principal and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment will approve or disapprove any field trip request.

A standard main office permission slip for school field trips, overnight, and overseas trips must be completed, signed, and submitted to the teacher and administration before the scheduled event. On all such trips, all school rules shall apply. All trips require a minimum of two chaperones along with administrative approval.

Parents/guardians are allowed to pick up their own child/student from field trips but must submit the [Alternate Field Trip Transportation Form](#) at least 24 hours prior to the event. If a parent would like their student to ride home with another parent, they would need to submit the [Alternate Field Trip Transportation Form](#) at least 24 hours prior to the event.

If parents/guardians provide transportation to, or allow another adult to provide transportation to, scheduled school field trips, the parent/guardian or designated adult transporting the students shall assume all resulting liability, and the school shall assume no liability. Under no circumstances will students transport themselves or other students to or from any school event.

Parent/Guardian Groups

Parent/guardian volunteer groups exist in each school and volunteers are highly needed. Please contact your child/children school or parent group if you are interested in volunteering. Click on the link below to read the [District's School Volunteer Policy](#).

School Day Schedule

Children in grades K-4 enter school at 8:15 a.m. and are dismissed at 2:45 p.m. Students are considered late if they arrive after 8:35 a.m. During the regular school day, children have snack, lunch, and recess. Please contact your child's schools for your child's daily schedule.

Preschool Schedule -Please contact your child's school for school hours.

Emergency Telephone Calls

When you find it necessary (emergency) to telephone your child at the school, the message will be relayed to him/her. If possible, please provide your child with all instructions before she/he leaves home in the morning. Parents/guardians are not allowed to communicate with their children via electronic devices (call, texting etc.) during school hours, as this causes disruption to the learning environment. You may contact educators after 8:00 before students arrive or after school is dismissed until 3:15. If an educator is with students, we will take a message and have the educator call you back later.

Visitors to the School

Any visitor shall report to the main entrance of each school's office upon entering the school building. Once you sign in and indicate your reason for visiting, visitor passes will be issued. Passes will be visibly worn throughout the entire time you are on school grounds and return passes to the Office when you are done.

Moment of Silence

The Merrimack School Board has directed the superintendent to establish regulations that make available a moment of silence consisting of 15-20 seconds each school day as part of the opening exercises for each school.

Letters/Notices Brought to School by Students

If a student wants to give an invitation or notice to another student(s), it is required to put the invitation/notice in an envelope with the receiving student's name on the envelope. The classroom teacher will designate a time for when to disburse the envelope(s).

Religious Rights and Responsibilities

Respect for the religious rights and responsibilities of students and educators has been and always will be a part of the Merrimack School District. Please see the [Commitment to Religious Neutrality Policy](#).

Student Dress

We request that students come to school with shoes that have backs to utilize all equipment safely. Additionally, we ask that students not wear clothing which advertises alcohol or tobacco, contains profanity, or promotes the use of illegal substances. Should we have difficulty with respect to a child's attire, we shall call the parent/guardian and ask them to bring in a change of clothing. Please [review the Merrimack District dress code here](#).

Play Items/Cell Phones/Electronic Devices Brought to School

We request that students not bring play items (e.g., electronic games, trading cards, wireless devices, stuffed animals/dolls, cellphones, and smart watches) to school. This also pertains to cameras unless authorized by an educator for a field trip or class project.

Students will not be allowed to carry cell phones or use other personal electronic devices, including smartwatches, during the school day unless they have a medical need, their IEP or Section 504 plan indicate that such a device is necessary to support their learning, or when required to support emergent multilingual students. Non-compliance with these expectations will result in the device being brought to the main office to be picked up at the end of the day. These offenses will be recorded and multiple offenses may result in disciplinary action in accordance with [policy JICD](#).

Pursuant to RSA 189:1-a, V, the Merrimack School District is in the process of developing a policy pertaining to the use of student cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices. In the event of conflict between this handbook and the Merrimack School District policy, the policy shall govern.

Homeless Policy and Situations

Students are considered homeless when the student is lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Are abandoned in hospitals;
- Awaiting foster care placement;
- Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings;
- Are migratory children living in the conditions described above.

If your family is living in any of the aforementioned situations, all PK-12 students have certain rights or protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act. Please contact the Merrimack School District Homeless Coordinator, Jocelyne Pinnsonneault at (603) 424-6200 for further information. Please click on the following link for the [full policy for homelessness](#).

Please click on the link for the [Education of Children in Foster Care Policy](#).

Educator Qualifications

The Merrimack School District adheres to New Hampshire's Educator Certification Requirements under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. Parents/Guardians have the right to know the qualifications of their child's educator. This includes the state certification and degrees held. Information may be obtained from the Superintendent's office by calling (603) 424- 6200.

OTHER POLICIES

[Home School Policy on Instruction](#)

[Admission of Tuition and Non-Resident Students](#)

[Change of school assignment on the basis of best interest or manifest educational hardship policy](#)

[Fiscal Management and Investment policy](#)

TRANSPORTATION

School Bus Rules

Students are expected to be ready to board the bus in a safe manner at the bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to pick up time. If there is a student issue, contact the Transportation Coordinator at 603-440-2282. If there is a route or driver issue contact Student Transportation of America at 603-424-7880.

Cell phones are not to be used on the school bus. This prevents sharing of content that another family may deem inappropriate such as music, videos, recording or taking photos of other people without their permission and posting to social media.

Wait for thumbs up from the bus driver prior to crossing to load or unload. Crossing students should always look both ways after getting the thumbs up.

Food, drinks (except water), and candy/gum are not allowed to be eaten on the bus.

All students should ride the bus that is assigned to their legal address(es). If a student has a hardship and must ride a different bus, a note from the guardian listing the date, the child's name, the reason for the request and the address they are riding to must be submitted to the school office for approval. If approved using the school district guidelines, a copy of the stamped note will be given back to the student to hand to the driver. If a student does not have a stamped note, they cannot ride a different bus or disembark to a different address.

Please notify the bus company if your child has a medical issue that the driver should be made aware of. There are two waves of buses at the middle school and high school.

Student Rules

- Follow directions of the driver the first time given.
- Arrive at the bus stop at least 10 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- Wait in a safe place, clear of traffic and at least 10 feet away from where the bus stops.
- Wait in an orderly line and avoid horseplay.
- Cross the road or street in front of the bus only after the bus has come to a complete stop and upon direction of the driver (10 foot minimum crossing distance).
- Go directly to an available or assigned seat when entering the bus.
- Remain seated and keep aisles and exits clear.
- Exhibit classroom conduct at all times.
- Refrain from throwing or passing objects on, from or into buses.
- Allowed to carry only objects that can be held on his/her lap.
- Refrain from the use of profane language and obscene gestures on the bus.
- Refrain from eating and drinking on the bus.
- Respect the rights and safety of others
- Refrain from leaving or boarding the bus at locations other than the assigned stops at home or school.
- Prohibited from using tobacco products, alcohol, drugs, or any controlled substance on the bus.
- Prohibited from carrying hazardous materials, nuisance items and animals onto the bus.
- Prohibited from extending head, arms or objects out of the bus windows.
- Prohibited from hitching rides via the rear bumper or other parts of the bus.

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS CONCERNING STUDENT RECORDS AND DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords Parents/Guardians and students who are 18 years of age or older (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the students’ education records. Please click on the link below for the [policy for records access in the district](#).

These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days after the day the district receives a request for access.
- Parents/guardians or eligible students, who wish to inspect their child’s or their education records, shall submit to the school principal/designee. Please specify in the written request the records they wish to inspect. The school official will decide for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents/guardians or eligible students who wish to ask the district to amend their child’s or their education record shall write the school principal/designee and will clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed, if the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the Parent/Guardian or eligible student, the school shall notify the Parent/Guardian or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures shall be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official typically includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board.

A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII (Personal Identifiable Information) from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a Parent/Guardian or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a Parent/guardian, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student’s enrollment or transfer. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school or school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent/guardian or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request, or the disclosure is initiated by the parent/guardian or eligible student.]

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official typically includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII (Personal Identifiable Information) from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a Parent/Guardian or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a Parent/guardian, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the [School] to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Student Privacy Policy Office

U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Office, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-8520,
FERPA.Complaints@ed.gov.

See the list below of the disclosures that elementary and secondary schools may make without consent.

FERPA permits the disclosure of personal identifiable information from students' education records, without consent of the Parent/Guardian or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in 34 CFR § 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the Parent/Guardian or eligible student, 34 CFR § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure.

Parents/Guardians and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose personal identifiable information from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents/guardians or the eligible student.

To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in 34 CFR § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(3) are met. (34 CFR § 99.31(a)(1))

To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of 34 CFR § 99.34. (34 CFR § 99.31(a)(3)(ii)(2))

To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency (SEA) in the Parent/Guardian or eligible student's State. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of 34 CFR § 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State- supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf, if applicable requirements are met. (34 CFR § § 99.31(a)(3)(ii)(3) and 34 CFR § 99.35.

In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary for such purposes as to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (34 CFR § 99.31(a)(3)(ii)(4)(i)).

To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a state statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to 34 CFR § 99.38. (34 CFR § 99.31(a)(3)(ii)(5)).

To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) Improve instruction, if applicable requirements are met. (34 CFR § 99.31(a)(3)(ii)(6)).

- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (34 CFR § 99.31(a)(3)(ii)(7)).
- To parents/guardians of an eligible student if the student is dependent for IRS tax purposes. (34 CFR § 99.31(a)(3)(ii) (8)).
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena if applicable requirements are met. (34 CFR § 99.31(a)(3)(ii) (9)).
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to 34 CFR § 99.36 (34 CFR § 99.31(a)(3)(ii)(10)).
- Information the school has designated as "directory information" if applicable requirements under 34 CFR § 99.37 are met. (34 CFR § 99.31(a)(3)(ii)(11))

- To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who is authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student in foster care placement. (20 U.S.C. 34 CFR § 1232g(b)(1)(L))
- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions. (20 U.S.C. 34 CFR § 1232g(b)(1)(K))

DIRECTORY INFORMATION/PUBLICATION OF STUDENT INFORMATION

The Merrimack School District (MSD) maintains educational records and may provide information designated as Directory Information consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Each year, the district shall give parents/guardians public notice of the types of information designated as Directory Information and shall release such Directory Information, at its discretion, to external sources upon receipt of a request for such information. Information will be withheld upon parental or guardian written request.

The Merrimack School District defines directory information as the student's name, address, telephone number, date of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight, and height of members of athletic teams, photograph, dates of attendance, awards, and most recent educational institution attended.

Effective September 15, 1983, the Merrimack School District shall continue to release such directory information at its discretion to external sources upon receipt of a request for such information unless a parent/guardian or student eighteen years of age requests such information be withheld.

Parents/guardians or students eighteen years of age may refuse designation of any or all the directory information for a specific student provided that a written request to that effect is received by the Superintendent of Schools, 36 McElwain Street, Merrimack NH. 03054, **by September 15 of each year.**

CRITERIA FOR PUBLICATION OF SCHOOL-RELATED MATERIAL ON THE INTERNET

The purpose of the Merrimack School District website is to provide parents/guardians, students, and community members with efficient access to information relevant to the Merrimack School District. This purpose is undertaken with full attention to compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Definitions

- "Student or staff-generated work" means stories, essays, reports, poems, artwork, photographs of artwork or projects, audio-visual performances or presentations, or other compositions of tangible content created by students or District staff members.
- "Staff-created website" means any ancillary website or web page created by a staff member of the Merrimack School District, which has been approved by the superintendent or his/her designee. All approved staff-created websites must be linked from a Merrimack School District website.
- "Merrimack School District website" means the district website or any Merrimack school website.

Criteria

Only material which is determined by the superintendent or his/her designee to be consistent with the purpose stated above shall be made available on a Merrimack School District website or on any staff- created website.

All Merrimack School District websites or staff-created websites must contain an email link to the webmaster or responsible party. If the website is created by a student, the name and an email link to the adult supervisor must be used.

- Full names of students or staff members and other personally identifying searchable text may be posted on a Merrimack School District website or an approved staff- created website unless the student's Parents/guardians or the staff members have notified the school in writing that they do not grant consent for this information to be made available.
- Student or staff-generated work may be posted on a Merrimack School District website or a staff- created website. Such postings may include the student's name, grade level and educator, but no other identifying information. Students or staff members must be consulted before posting any of their original work because, according to Copyright Law, all work is protected by copyright as soon as it is generated.
- Photographs of students or staff members participating in activities, sports or other school-related events may be posted on a Merrimack School District website or a staff- created website. Such postings shall identify only the activity or event depicted and where appropriate, the grade level and/or educator. No other identifying information about the students depicted in the photographs may be included without explicit written consent. Names shall not be included in the image file name on the server. **Any posting of work, photographs, or recognitions will be removed upon request of the Parent/Guardian, or the individual involved.**

STUDENT BEHAVIOR, CONDUCT, DISCIPLINE AND DUE PROCESS PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION - BULLYING

Revised Statutes Annotated, Chapter 189:9-a and Revised Statutes Annotated, Chapter 193:13 refer to the authorization of the superintendent, or his/her representative, to suspend and/or dismiss students from school or school transportation reasons. It is recognized that both educators and administrators need discretionary power to invoke disciplinary actions and procedures, and to maintain a climate conducive to learning and the protection of life and property. Click here for the [Student Conduct, Discipline and Due Process](#).

All students have the right to attend school and school-sponsored activities that are safe, secure and peaceful environments. Students shall be protected from all forms of physical, emotional, and psychological bullying and cyberbullying. Bullying in schools has historically included actions shown to be motivated by a pupil's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry or ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical mental emotional or learning disability, gender, gender identity and expression, appearance, or other distinguishing personal characteristics, or based on association with any person identified in any of the above categories. It is the intent of this policy to protect children from physical, emotional, and psychological harm by addressing bullying and cyberbullying of any kind in the district/schools, and to prevent the creation of a hostile educational environment. All students are protected under this policy, regardless of their legal status. This policy applies to students, school district employees, school volunteers, coaches, and persons who have contact with pupils in connection with school classes, activities, and programs. However, only a student may be a perpetrator of bullying under this policy and RSA 193-F; allegations of bullying by staff shall be treated separately as a personnel matter. Bullying and cyberbullying outside of school activities or off school premises is subject to this policy as set forth herein.

[Click here for the complete bullying policy.](#)

ELEMENTARY DISCIPLINE CODE

The purpose of the elementary discipline code is to provide clear and consistent guidelines for a safe, respectful, and responsible learning environment for all. To achieve this purpose, the school shall work closely with staff, families, and students to clearly articulate the school's behavioral expectations and to provide instruction on social and emotional learning skills and competencies. Click here for the [policy on Behavior Management and Intervention](#).

It is the educator's responsibility to ensure that students are safe in the classroom and throughout all school settings. The school shall follow the Merrimack School District policies on behavior and discipline. Please access this link for the Student Conduct policy of Merrimack and the link (again) for the [Student Conduct, Discipline and Due Process policy](#).

Referrals to administration for disciplinary action could result in but are not limited to the following:

Vandalism - up to three days loss of recess, complete restitution, in-school/out-of-school suspension up to three/five days, and/or legal action when appropriate - Parent/Guardian contact.

Possession of firearms - any student who brings or possesses a firearm as defined in section 921 of Title 18 of the US code in a safe school zone as defined in 312 193-D:1 without written authorization from the superintendent or designee shall be expelled from school by the local school board for a period of not less than 12 months. Any expulsion shall be subject to review by the local school board if requested by a Parent/Guardian prior to the start of each school year, and further, any Parent/Guardian shall have the right to appeal any such expulsion by the local school board to the state board of education.

Theft of school or private property - Parent/Guardian contact, up to five days loss of recess, complete restitution, in-school/out-of-school suspension from school up to five days, legal action when appropriate.

Possession of narcotics, alcoholic beverages, and drugs - Parent/Guardian contact, confiscation of materials, in-school/out-of-school suspension up to five days.

Smoking or possession of smoking material - Parent/Guardian contact, confiscation of materials, in-school/out-of-school suspension up to five days.

Other violations as identified in School Board Policy and Administrative Procedure. (The above list is not intended to be exhaustive and are examples of potential consequences for student conduct and behavior. The district reserves the right to refer a disciplinary matter to the law enforcement or other third parties if appropriate given the conduct and the circumstances involved.

Teasing/taunting of others - Verbal warning, Parent/Guardian contact, up to three/five days of recess, in-school/out-of-school suspension up to five days.

Harassment/bullying - Parent/guardian contact, up to three/five days loss of recess, in-school and out of school suspension up to five days, notification to the Superintendent.

Argumentative or disrespectful actions - verbal warning, up to three/five days loss of recess, Parent/Guardian contact, in-school/out-of-school suspension up to five days.

Profane language or actions – verbal warning. Parent/Guardian contact, up to five days of loss of recess, in-school/out-of-school suspension up to five days.

Failure to follow rules or directions – verbal warning, Parent/Guardian contact, up to five days loss of recess, after school detention, in school/out of school suspension up to five days.

Disruption of instruction – verbal warning, Parent/Guardian contact, up to five days loss of recess.

Unsafe physical actions (e.g., throwing objects, pushing, tripping) – verbal warning, Parent/Guardian contact, loss of recess, in-school/out-of-school suspension up to five days.

Rough play (e.g., playing a game too aggressively, retaliating) – verbal warning, Parent/Guardian contact, up to five days of loss of recess.

Threatening or endangering others either physically or emotionally - Parent/Guardian contact, up to five days loss of recess, in-school/out-of-school suspension up to five days.

Fighting – Parent/Guardian contract, up to five days loss of recess, in-school/out-of-school suspension up to five days.

Possession of dangerous items/weapons (e.g., all knives including possession of dangerous items/weapons including Swiss Army and Boy Scout Knives, sling shots, laser pointers and other objects viewed and/or used as weapons) - Parent/Guardian contact, in-school/out-of-school suspension up to three/five days, legal action when appropriate.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, MERRIMACK POLICE DEPARTMENT, AND MERRIMACK YOUTH ASSOCIATION

Statement of Common Purpose

The partnership between the Merrimack Elementary Schools, Merrimack Youth Association (MYA), and the Merrimack Police Department creates cooperative opportunities for interaction and support to enhance the educational and social growth of Merrimack youth. The purpose of this partnership is to provide clear and consistent guidelines for a safe environment for the youth of Merrimack. We believe this alignment creates a spirit of involvement and concern for youth in the development of respect, cooperation as well as good sportsmanship and citizenship. An important goal of the partnership is to offer opportunities for youth to grow physically, socially, and emotionally as well as build bridges to develop a sense of unity and pride in our community.

The purpose of this statement is to guide our youth toward becoming resourceful, confident community members who can adapt and contribute to an ever-changing society. The Merrimack Elementary Schools, MYA (Merrimack Youth Association), and the Merrimack Police Department share the following goals and expectations:

Youth are expected to:

- Take responsibility for their behavior and be accountable for their decisions at school and community events.
- Learn social skills as well as respect and fair play through interaction with team members, coaches, and officials while engaged in formal and informal recreation programs.
- Understand that competition is healthy, but participation and good sportsmanship are equally important goals.
- Make decisions that will lead to positive outcomes.
- Develop the ability to work cooperatively in group settings.

Adults (school personnel, police officers, coaches, Parents/Guardians, volunteers, and others) are expected to:

- Teach and model respect for self and others. Provide a safe and positive environment for youth to grow physically, socially, and emotionally.
- Provide a safe and positive environment for youth to grow physically, socially, and emotionally.
- Provide opportunities for youth to develop and master basic skills that include sharing, working with others, and accepting success as well as disappointment.
- Take responsibility to maintain discipline and model good sportsmanship.
- Foster life skills such as leadership, organization, and time management.

The following behaviors are examples of actions that will not be tolerated and will result in corrective action by the appropriate organization(s):

- Harassment and bullying
- Teasing and taunting
- Profane language and actions
- Unsafe physical action
- Fighting
- Threatening or endangering others
- Destruction of property

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES

Please note that the district is in the process of reviewing and/or updating many of its policies; therefore, the below may be subject to change throughout the year. Parents/Guardians and students are encouraged to visit the district's [website](#) for all updated district's policies.

DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

DISTRIBUTION AND DISPLAY OF INFORMATION AT SCHOOLS

EXCEPTIONS TO USE OF SPECIFIC COURSE MATERIALS

NON-DISCRIMINATION, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT and DISTRICT ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PLAN

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS NON-DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT SCHOOL PERSONNEL, EMPLOYEES, STUDENTS OR ADMINISTRATION

NON-EDUCATIONAL SURVEYS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

ANIMALS IN THE SCHOOL AND SERVICE ANIMALS POLICIES

Absent extraordinary circumstances, no student and/or family-owned pets will be permitted at school or on school grounds, including emotional support and comfort animals, unless the animal's presence is required for a student to receive a free appropriate public education, as determined by that student's IEP or Section 504 Team. This prohibition does not include service animals governed by District Policy IMGA. Any request to bring an animal to school or on school grounds that does not involve a special education or Section 504 student must be made to the Superintendent. The request will be reviewed by the Superintendent or their designee and will only be granted in unusual or extraordinary circumstances. The decision of the Superintendent shall be final. The School District may bring in animals for emotional support purposes following traumatic or other events that emotionally impact students and/or staff.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION POLICY

STUDENT USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

POLICY FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY INSTRUCTION

POLICY FOR PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

PROCEDURE FOR THE PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY AND PLAN

[The Merrimack Suicide Prevention and Response Plan](#) was implemented in 2020 in response to the Suicide Prevention Education statute RSA 193:J mandating that school districts provide evidence-based suicide prevention education and training to staff and students to "reduce suicides in our school population." The Merrimack School District seeks to join with families and the community in the important work of suicide prevention, understanding that this is an integral component of the trauma-informed System of Care and Learning Supports that promotes student social-emotional health and wellbeing and equitable access to education. The district recognizes that physical and mental health are integral to student success, both in school and beyond graduation and believes that only through a proactive and collaborative approach between the school, families, and the community, can the problem of youth suicide be addressed.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

On August 12, 2024, the Merrimack School Board adopted an updated Title IX Policy and Grievance procedure. This policy has been updated consistent with the revised Title IX regulations and is available online at sau26.org; if you would like a hard copy of the policy, please contact Amy Doyle, Title IX Coordinator, at 603-424-6200.

ATTENDANCE

Your child's attendance at school is vital to his/her success. See the below graphic for outcomes of good attendance. If your child is struggling to come to school or to attend school on time, please reach out to your school's administration, the school counselor or SEL support specialist. We are here to help and want to partner with families, so please contact us for support. Below is a graphic that explains the importance of school attendance.



ATTENDANCE POLICY

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND MONITORING

TRUANCY POLICY

Truancy is defined as any unexcused absence from class or school. Ten half-days or five full days of unexcused absence during a school year constitutes habitual truancy.

A half-day absence is defined as a student missing more than two hours of instructional time and less than three and one-half hours of instructional time. Any absence of more than three and one-half hours of instructional time shall be considered a full-day absence.

The Principal or his/her designee or Truant Officer are hereby designated as a District employee responsible for overseeing truancy issues.

Developing and Coordinating Strategies for Truancy Reduction

The Board encourages the administration to seek truancy-prevention and truancy-reduction strategies along with the recommendations listed below. The Superintendent is authorized to develop and utilize other means, guidelines and programs aimed at preventing and reducing truancy.

- Coordinate truancy-prevention strategies based on the early identification of truancy, such as prompt notification of absences to parents/guardians.
- Assist school staff in developing site-based attendance teams.
- Encourage and coordinate the adoption of attendance-incentive programs at school sites on an individual basis as a targeted intervention that rewards and celebrates good attendance and significant improvements in attendance.

Intervention Process to Address Truancy

The Principal or his/her designee shall ensure that the administrative guidelines on attendance properly address the matter of truancy by utilizing a building attendance team whose role is to identify students who are habitually truant as defined above. When the Principal or his/her designee identifies a student who is habitually truant or who is in danger of becoming habitually truant, he/she shall commence a tiered intervention with the student, the student's parents, and other staff members as may be deemed necessary. The tiered intervention shall be comprised of processes including, but not limited to:

- Investigate the cause(s) of the student's truant behavior;
- Consider, when appropriate, modification of the student's educational program to meet particular needs that may be causing the truancy;
- Involve the parents/guardians in the development of a plan designed to reduce the truancy;
- Seek alternative disciplinary measures, but still retain the right to impose discipline in accordance with the District's policies and administrative guidelines on student discipline

Parent/Guardian Involvement in Truancy Intervention

When a student reaches habitual truancy status or is in danger of reaching habitual truancy status, the Principal or his/her designee shall send the student's parent/guardian a letter which includes:

- A statement that the student has become or is in danger of becoming habitually truant;
- A statement of the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure that the student attends school; and
- A request for a meeting between the parents/guardians and the Principal or his/her designee to discuss the student's truancy and develop a plan for reducing the student's truancy.

Parent/Guardian Notification of Truancy Policy

The Superintendent shall ensure that this policy is included in or referenced in the parent/student handbook and is communicated to parents/guardians annually at the beginning of each school year.

Family Trips/Educational Opportunities:

The school Principal or his/her designee may also grant an excused absence for family trips, under the following conditions:

- To request an excused absence for a family trip: Two weeks prior to the trip, the parents/guardians shall contact the Principal in writing explaining the reason for the absences, and the dates the child will be out.
- The Principal shall make a determination and provide written notification of his/her decision to the parent/guardian in advance of the trip. Please note that, even in the event of an excused absence due to a family trip, the report card will still reflect the absences.

USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT/SECLUSION (Policy JKAA)

The Merrimack School District affirms the right of all children to be treated with dignity. The Merrimack School District authorizes trained staff members to use physical restraints and seclusion in limited situations. In addition, it is expected that school staff will be trained in and implement positive and constructive methods to de-escalate potentially dangerous situations, prior to any use of physical restraint or seclusion.

STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

STUDENT BEHAVIOR, CONDUCT, DISCIPLINE AND DUE PROCESS POLICY

[REPORTING CHILD ABUSE OF NEGLECT](#)

[VIDEO SURVEILLANCE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY](#)

[EXCEPTIONS TO USE OF COURSE SPECIFIC MATERIALS](#)

[NON-DISCRIMINATION, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT AND DISTRICT ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PLAN](#)

[ANNUAL NOTICE OF CONTACT INFORMATION](#)

[HEALTH ADMINISTRATION AND EXEMPTION FROM INSTRUCTION](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR A FULL LIST OF DISTRICT POLICIES](#)

CHILDHOOD DISEASES

[Here is a link to the Communicable and Infectious Disease policy.](#)

Note: Not all communicable diseases are listed. If your child is diagnosed with a disease that is not noted, please call the health office for school admission criteria. Please notify the school nurse when your child is diagnosed with any communicable disease.

Disease	Incubation Period	School Re-admission Criteria
Chicken Pox (Varicella) & Shingles	11-20 weeks (usually 14-16 days). Contagious from 2 days before the rash appears to no more than 6 days after the appearance of the first crop of vesicles	Exclude for 1 week after the rash appears or until all vesicles have dried. Individuals with Shingles should be excluded if open blisters cannot be covered.
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	Bacterial: 24-72 hours Viral: 12 hours - 12 days	Children with purulent conjunctivitis should be excluded until examined by a physician and approved for readmission.
Fifth Disease	4-20 days	Excluding fever. Immunosuppressed students, those with chronic blood disorders (i.e., sickle cell anemia), and/or pregnant contacts should contact their medical provider for advice.
Giardiasis	5-25 days or longer (Usually 7-10 days)	Exclude affected students and staff while they are having diarrhea.
German Measles (Rubella)	14-21 days (average 16-18 days)	Exclude for 7 days after rash onset.
Hepatitis A	15-50 days (average 28-30 days)	Excluding for 1 week after jaundice appears.
Hepatitis B (Serum Hepatitis)	45-180 days (average 60-90 days)	Hepatitis-B carrier children with risk factors (i.e., biting, frequent scratching, generalized dermatitis) should be assessed for exclusion on an individual basis.
Measles (Rubeola)	7-18 days (commonly 10 days)	Exclude for 4 days after appearance of rash.
Mumps	12-26 days	Exclude for 9 days from onset of (infectious Parotitis) swelling; less if swelling has completely subsided.
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	7-14 days (no more than 21 days)	Confirmed or probable cases are excluded for 5 days after the start of an appropriate antibiotic. Untreated probable or confirmed cases are excluded from school for 3 weeks after the onset of paroxysmal cough.
Strep Throat & Scarlet Fever	2-5 days (average 1-3 days)	Exclude until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been started and until there is no fever present.

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit #26 36 McElwain Street
Merrimack, New Hampshire 03054 Tel. (603) 424-6200 Fax (603) 424-6229

DR. KATHLEEN SCHOLAND
Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

EVERETT V. OLSEN, Jr.
Chief Educational Officer

MATTHEW D. SHEVENELL
Assistant Superintendent for Business

**ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN
ANNUAL NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY**

August 28, 2025

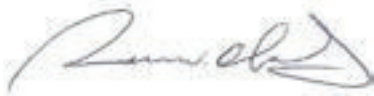
To Staff, Parents/Guardians, and Students:

This notice serves to fulfill annual notification requirements in accordance with Section 763.93 of the *Asbestos Emergency Response Act* (AHERA). AHERA requires that all school buildings be visually inspected by accredited inspectors to identify all asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM) that may be present in the school environment. As required under AHERA, the Merrimack School District must maintain an Asbestos Management Plan (AMP) and keep the AMP on file at the school, and the School Administrative Unit Office. The AMP is available for review during school hours, Monday through Friday.

Periodic surveillance of known asbestos in the Merrimack School District is performed every six months by a designated person to assess the condition of the ACBM. Six-month Assessment Results are maintained and are also available for review in the AMP.

For additional information, please contact our Local Educational Agency Designee, Thomas Touseau at 603-235-2472, or thomas.touseau@sau26.org

Sincerely,



Everett V. Olsen, Jr. Chief Educational Officer

cc: Faculty Staff
Parent/Guardians School Website

Merrimack School District - SAU 26

School Calendar 2025-2026

Approved 2/17/25
Revision 4/21/25

Students: 2 days	August 2025						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Aug 25 - Classroom Set Up - no MESSA						1	2
Aug 26 - District Mtgs/PD - All Staff	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Aug 27 - Building Mtgs/PD - All Staff	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Aug 28 - First Day of School Transition Day*	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
*Gr.K,5,7,9 Regular Arrival Time	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
*All other grades: 2hr delay	31						

Students: 19 days	January 2026						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Jan 1 - No School/New Years' Day					1	2	3
Jan 2 - No School	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Jan 19 - No School/MLK Jr Day	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Students: 20 days	September 2025						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Sept 1 - No School/Labor Day		1	2	3	4	5	6
Sept 10 - PD Day	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30				

Students: 15 days	February 2026						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Feb 4 - Early Release	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Feb 23 to 27 - No School/February Break	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Students: 22 days	October 2025						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Oct 10 - Early Release				1	2	3	4
Oct 13 - Columbus/Indigenous people Day	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30	31	

Students: 21 days	March 2026						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Mar 11 - Workshop Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Mar 25 - Early Release	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30	31				

Students: 16 days	November 2025						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
							1
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Nov 11 - No School/Veterans Day Observed	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Nov 26-28 - No School/Thanksgiving Break	23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Students: 17 days	April 2026						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Apr 7 - No School/Town Elections				1	2	3	4
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Apr 27 to May 1 - No School/Spring Break	26	27	28	29	30		

Students: 15 days	December 2025						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Dec 10 - Early Release		1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Dec 22 to Jan 2 - No School/Winter Break	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30	31			

Students: 19 days	May 2026						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
May 1 - No School						1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
May 20 - Early Release	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
May 25 - No School/Memorial Day	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31						

Students: 14 days	June 2026						
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
June 13 - Tentative Graduation Date	1	2	3	4	5	6	
June 18 - Tentative last day of school-ER	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30				

Key

Teacher Workshop, No School for Students	
First/Last Day of School for Students	
No School, Observed Holiday/Vacation	
Early Release	
Summer Break/Weekends (no school)	

School Start/End Times

School	Start	End	ER Dismissal
Merrimack Middle School	7:30	2:05	11:00
Merrimack High School	7:30	2:15	11:15
Mastricola Elementary	8:30	2:45	12:15
Reeds Ferry Elementary	8:30	2:45	12:15
Thorntons Ferry Elementary	8:30	2:45	12:15
Mastricola Upper Elementary	8:40	2:55	12:25

Important Dates*

Event	MES	RFS	TFS	MUES	MMS	MHS
Parent Information Night	9/25	9/25	9/25	10/2	9/3 & 9/4	9/11
Fall Parent Teacher Conferences	11/6 & 11/10	11/6 & 11/10	11/6 & 11/10	10/23 & 10/29	10/9 & 10/14	10/9, 10/14
Kindergarten Registration						
Kindergarten Registration Night	1/22	1/22	1/22			
Spring Parent Teacher Conferences	3/10 & 3/12	3/10 & 3/12	3/10 & 3/12	2/12 & 2/17	3/25	3/12, 3/18
Term/Marking Period End Dates	12/5, 3/20, 6/12	12/5, 3/20, 6/12	12/5, 3/20, 6/12	12/5, 3/20, 6/12		10/31, 1/23, 4/3, 6/19
Report Cards	12/19, 4/3, 6/18	12/19, 4/3, 6/18	12/19, 4/3, 6/18	12/19, 4/3, 6/18		11/14, 2/6, 4/17, 6/21
Election Dates	Town Elections April 7, 2026					

* Dates above are subject to change with notice