

MERRITT SECONDARY CODE OF CONDUCT

Mission Statement:

Merritt Secondary's vision is to inspire and empower one another to lead purposeful lives. We will passionately and respectfully engage one another to recognize and reach our individual potential.

The Code of Conduct applies to all student behaviour. These expectations apply to behaviour at school, during school-organized or sponsored activities, while going to and from school, and behaviour beyond these times (including on-line behaviour) that negatively impact the safe, caring or orderly environment of the school, and/or student learning.

Merritt Secondary School promotes the values expressed in the BC Human Rights Code respecting the rights of all individuals in accordance with the law – prohibiting discrimination based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, gender or sexual orientation – in respect of discriminatory publication and discrimination in accommodation, service and facility in the school environment. The school will treat seriously, behaviour or communication that discriminates based on any of the prohibited grounds listed above.

Consequences/outcomes are determined by severity of the incident, frequency of infractions, and student age/maturity. Expectations for appropriate behaviour are incremental and progressive as students' progress up through the grades. There will be a focus on consequences that are restorative, rather than punitive, wherever possible and appropriate. Special consideration may apply to students with special needs if they are unable to comply due to having a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature.



Merritt Secondary School Code of Conduct

As a member of Merritt Secondary School, we believe that all children have the right to learn in a safe, caring, and orderly environment. Our expectations are that students will maintain an attitude that is cooperative, courteous, and respectful.

Be Respectful to Yourself – Caring about your learning and yourself, including safety.

Some examples include:

- Value relationships and respect your culture and that of others
- Make strong decisions
- Be self-determined to pursue your personal best
- Self-regulate
- Value diversity
- Be brave and participate when things are challenging
- Be sensible

Be Respectful to Others – Considerate of others' personal feelings and properties.

Some examples include:

- Solve problems in a peaceful way
- Treat others with respect
- Value diversity
- Connect and engage with others in a positive way
- Build strong relationships

Be Respectful to Property – Caring about your school and environment.

Some examples include:

- Contribute to your school community and care for the school environment
- Take care of and be responsible with school resources
- Ask before borrowing and return equipment on time and in good working order

Be Safe – Learn and Follow School Rules.

Some examples include:

- Walk calmly – no running in the hallways
- Stay in designated areas
- Report dangerous situations to staff
- Report any bullying or harassment of other students to any staff member
- Do not loiter in the hallways

Our Code of Conduct is designed to provide guidelines for appropriate student behavior while under the jurisdiction of the school or at any school-sponsored function.

Inappropriate behaviour can consist of, but is not limited to:

- Rudeness, swearing, dishonesty, stealing
- Fighting (or play fighting)
- Lack of respect for others, teasing, taunting, harassing
- Throwing objects (rocks, sticks, snowballs, etc.)
- Defiant behavior, insolence
- Running in the halls, littering, horseplay
- Unauthorized leaving of school grounds
- Use of tobacco products, vaping, drugs, or alcohol

The forms of unacceptable conduct cited above (and below) are only some examples and are not an all-inclusive list

Consequences:

Consequences will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, respecting individual rights, responsibilities, age, and maturity; and be restorative and restitution based and punitive when required.

Inappropriate behavior can typically have the following consequences:

- Review of expectations and a timeout from class or school
- Review of expectations, written assignment and/or loss of privileges
- Restorative Justice or Restitution (picking up garbage, sweeping, working with custodian, volunteering, or community service)
- Conflict resolution
- Parents informed pending on severity and rectification
- Meeting with the parents
- In school or out of school suspension (length depends on offense)
- Long term suspension (over 5 days) or referral to school district
- Consultation with police and or fire department
- Expulsion

Safe and Caring School Environments Should Be Free from Acts Of:

- Bullying of all types (physical, verbal, social, or cyber) harassment and marginalization (isolation, ignoring)
- Threat and intimidation
- Violence in any form
- Abuse in any form
- Discrimination in any form including race, colour, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, ancestor, or national origin.
- Retribution against a person who has reported incidents.

We Do Not Tolerate the Presence Of:

- Theft and Vandalism
- Intoxicating and banned substances (tobacco products, vaping, drugs, and alcohol)
- Weapons or replica (toy) weapons and explosives
- Intruders or trespassers – All visitors of school must report to the office
- Using tobacco products (vapes included) in non-designated areas

The above behavioural decisions can result in the following consequences:

- Parents informed pending on severity and rectification
- Meeting with the parents
- Drug and Alcohol Counselling
- Any tobacco, alcohol or drug products or paraphernalia will be confiscated immediately. Vapes will have to be picked up by parents.
- Possession of said products will result in further consequences
- RCMP involvement
- In school or out of school suspension (length depends on offense)
- Vaping in the school or on school grounds can carry a 1-3-day suspension pending on the number of infractions leading up to and including the event.
- Long term suspension (over 5 days) or referral to school district
- Consultation with police and or fire department
- Expulsion

Personal Digital Devices: Students in Grade 8-12 are not permitted to use personal digital devices during class periods unless specifically directed by the instructor (e.g. for the purpose of digital literacy learning). During instructional hours, students must turn off their devices and store them in their lockers, backpack, or designated areas. Devices may be used before and after school, and during breaks only. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal digital devices.

Exemptions: MSS is committed to equity and accessibility and therefore may allow exemptions to personal digital device restrictions for certain purposes including:

- Medical support needs
- As part of a Competency Based Individual Education Plan or Service Plan
- In case of emergency, students can access their phones with teacher or administrative approval.

Alternate Communication: Families needing to contact their children during instructional hours should do so by calling the school's main office. Messages will be promptly delivered to the students. Students wishing to contact their families can use the school office phones with permission.

Violations: Students in violation of the Personal Digital Device Policy will go through a tiered system of discipline actions.

Level 1- A warning from the classroom teacher and confiscation of the personal digital device for the remainder of the class. The student will then be expected to return the phone to their locker or designated area before the next class.

Level 2- The personal digital device will be confiscated by the teacher and returned at the end of the school day. The teacher will contact the family.

Level 3- The personal digital device will be confiscated and brought to the office, held by a school administrator, and returned at the end of the school day. After multiple office referrals the student will be required to store their phone in the office during instructional hours for a period of 3-5 days. The administrator will contact the family.

Level 4- If continued infractions of the Personal Digital Device Policy occur, they will be addressed individually with the teacher, family, and administrator meeting to discuss a support plan for the student.

Dress Code:

- Clothing should be suitable for a school learning environment.
- Clothing and footwear should be comfortable and appropriate for students to participate safely in all school activities including physical education, science and cooking.
- Clothing should demonstrate a respect for the school community and the B.C. Human Rights Code. For example, articles of clothing that promote direct or indirect messages or graphics referring to alcohol, drugs, gang culture, sex, weapons, violence, or profanity will not be permitted.
- Clothing may not encourage sexism, racism, homophobia, or discrimination regarding gender identity, sexual preference, race, religion, or origin.
- Any person dressed in an inappropriate manner will be advised discretely, and given an opportunity to meet the school dress code.

MSS reserves the right to adjust the guidelines around a student's dress code for specific learning situations. For example, science labs, cooking labs, shop classes and gym classes. We also reserve the right to adjust the dress code guidelines for educational purposes that require a higher level of professional dress. Please be advised that if a student does not have a change of clothes to address dress code conflicts, they will be asked to call home to get a change of clothes.

Notification:

As circumstances warrant, administrators have a responsibility to advise other parties following a behavior or incident.

- Parent of a student who is exhibiting major behaviours (in every instance)
- Parent of the student on the receiving end of a major incident (in every instance)
- Assistant Superintendent/Superintendent, or District Team (when necessary)
- Ministry Agencies and or RCMP (When a child reports or discloses any personal harm to him/herself or others – this is a legal requirement)

The Merritt Secondary School Code of Conduct has been structured to align with and adhere to the standards outlined:

The School Act 85 (1.1) 168 (2) (s.1) Provincial Standards Ministerial order 276/07, effective October 17, 2007

BC Human Rights Code, (SD 36 Policy No. 10900 and Regulation No. 10900 and Regulation No. 10900.1)

BC Ministry of Education: Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools A Guide (Nov. 2008) and Developing and Reviewing Codes of Conduct: A Companion (Aug. 2007), both found at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/>