

**Student/Parent Handbook  
2017-2018  
MERRITT SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Principal:  
**Bruce Bidney**

Vice-Principals:  
**Gian Cavaliere  
Kevin McGifford**



**VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT**

Our 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.

## **IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Board of School Trustees	250-378-5161
Coldwater Indian Band	250-378-6174
Correspondence School	250-378-4245
Crime stoppers	1-800-222-8477
Hospital	250-378-2242
Kengard Learning Centre	250-378-2157
Kids Help Line	1-800-668-6868
Life Touch Photography	1-250-707-3018
Lower Nicola Indian Band	250-378-5157
School Board Office	250-378-5161
<b>Merritt Secondary School</b>	<b>250-378-5131</b>
Nooaitch Indian Band	250-378-6141
Parent's Help Line	1-888-603-9100
RCMP	250-378-4262
Scw'exmx Child and Family Services	250-378-2771
South Central Health Unit (Public Health)	250-378-3400
Superintendent of Schools	250-378-5161
The Facts of Life Line	1-800-739-7367
Upper Nicola Indian Band	1-800-700-3342
Youth Against Violence Line	1-800-680-4264

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **FEES**

Students are required to pay a student activity fee (\$15.00) which goes towards sponsoring students events like dances. Athletic fees will be charged to participate on school teams. Athletic fees will be used to offset costs associated with running a team such as busing, TOC's and refs. Students may also be charged fees for some elective courses as approved by the Board of School Trustees.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks are issued by subject teachers. The Board of School Trustees has authorized a deposit of \$15.00 per student with a maximum of \$30.00 per family per school, to be paid at the time of registration or school opening. If a book is lost or damaged, students will be assessed the replacement value. (i.e.: Biology 12 text = \$110.00) The textbook deposit will be used to offset these costs. This money will be refunded when the student leaves M.S.S.

## **LOCKS AND LOCKERS**

Only MSS combination locks may be used and can be purchased from the office for \$8.00. In order to provide security for your belongings, you should keep your combination a private matter. Lockers are to be kept clean and free of graffiti. Posters and pictures will be allowed if they reflect good taste. Offending objects will be removed. Lockers are the property of MSS and thus, can be checked by school administration at any time. Lockers that are suspected of containing illicit drugs, alcohol, weapons, stolen items, or dangerous material will be opened and searched by school Administration at any time. Inappropriate items could be confiscated. Any damage to the locker will be the financial responsibility of the student to whom the locker was assigned.

## **VALUABLES**

To prevent theft the following suggestions are made:

1. Keep your combination private.
2. If you ride a bicycle, lock your bike to the bicycle stand.
3. Leave items of major value at home.
4. The school will not assume responsibility for any personal items.

## **PARKING**

Students must park in **designated areas only**. Parking on residential streets is bound by municipal regulations. Vehicles parked illegally (i.e.: fire lane) will be towed at owner's expense. Students who wish to park on MSS property must register their vehicles at the main office of Merritt Secondary School.

## **TELEPHONE**

The office telephone is a business phone and may only be used by students in the case of an emergency.

## **USE OF CELL PHONES**

Cell phones are excellent communication tools that many of our students own. They can also be quite disruptive to learning when used in class or other areas of the school when classes are in session, for example, a ringing phone during a lesson, a student replying to a text message during class time, a student texting answers to a test.

Many phones also come equipped with a camera that has the potential to invade the privacy of our students. Cell phones should be turned off and kept out of sight when students are in class, **except** with the permission of a teacher who encourages the educational use of these tools.

Teachers may require cell phones to be handed in to them during class. Cell phones **must not** be brought into the change rooms or washrooms, so that all students can be assured of their privacy.

Cell phones can be used before and after school, during lunch and at breaks.

### Consequences

Teachers may confiscate cell phones until the end of the period, or the day if students use them inappropriately. Students who repeatedly contravene the cell phone policy will be dealt with by the administration, and may face further disciplinary action. Parents may be required to come in to the school to get their child's confiscated cell phone.

### **TRANSPORTING STUDENTS**

Students **MAY NOT** drive their vehicles to any school function. These include all PE classes (arena, golf course, curling club, etc.), field trips, athletic, drama and music events. Students may drive themselves to and from school. Parents who drive students to school events will be required to have a criminal record check and submit a report of their driving record from ICBC.

### **MERRITT PUBLIC HEALTH YOUTH SERVICES**

Merritt Public Health Youth Services are now available at MSS on Thursdays from 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in the counseling area for all students currently registered at MSS. These services are free and confidential, providing health information, counseling and referrals for all aspects of youth health. Sexual health services including the provision of low cost birth control, low cost emergency contraception pills, and free pregnancy testing will also be available. Youth services can also be accessed Thursday 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. at Merritt Public Health - located at the Nicola Valley Hospital.

Merritt Public Health – 250-378-3400

### **VISITORS**

**All visitors are required to report to the office upon arrival.**

### **PERSONAL MESSAGES**

Office personnel will attempt to pass on personal student messages of an **urgent** nature only. When possible, parents are encouraged to leave voice mail messages on their child's cell phone. Parents should not ask or expect their children to respond to text messages or phone calls during class hours.

## STAFF MESSAGES

Parents are encouraged to contact teachers regarding any issues concerning their child. All email addresses are listed on our website. [www.merrittsecondaryschool.bc.ca](http://www.merrittsecondaryschool.bc.ca)

## MSS CODE OF CONDUCT

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to support our Vision/Mission Statement:

***"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."***

### **Expectations:**

These expectations are for all members of our school community while in attendance at school, while travelling to and from school, and while attending any school function at any location.

#### **I. Examples of Exemplary Conduct include the following:**

- a. Be truthful and trustworthy;
- b. Demonstrate respect for self, others, and the school;
- c. Assist in making the school a safe and respectful facility;
- d. Inform staff of incidents of bullying, harassment, intimidation or violence and discourage such acts;
- e. Participate in acts that bring credit to the school;
- f. Be a positive role model;
- g. Recognize our cultural diversity and act in a manner that ensures safety for all cultures in our school;
- h. Attend all classes on time, prepared to work.

#### **II. Examples of Unacceptable Conduct include these behaviours:**

- a. Behaviours that create unsafe conditions or that interfere with one's own learning or the learning of others. This includes texting or making phone calls during class;
- b. Bullying, harassment or intimidation of others;
- c. Retaliation against individuals who have reported breaches of our Code of Conduct;
- d. Watching, filming or encouraging bullying or fighting;
- e. Illegal acts such as possession, use, or distribution of any restricted, unsafe, or illegal materials/substances;
- f. Possession or use of any item that could be a weapon;
- g. Attempted theft, theft and/or damage to property;
- h. Abusive and profane language.

**Consequences:**

Whenever possible, incidents will be resolved by discussion, mediation and restitution. School responses to unacceptable behaviour are consistent and fair; and are framed around a restorative justice philosophy. We will respect the individual differences of students and respond to each situation according to the student's age, maturity, capacity and past conduct. As students mature there is an expectation that they will practice and model characteristics of increased personal responsibility and self-discipline.

**Notification:**

Minor infractions will be worked out with the student, and parents may be informed. For major infractions, parents of both offenders and victims will be informed by school officials. This communication may be a phone call, email, letter mailed home, and/or a meeting. As required by law and policy, additional agencies such as the police and/or school officials (Board office) will be informed.

**BC Human Rights Code**

All participants in school activities, events, or business shall conduct themselves in accordance with the BC Human Rights Code and its basic principles of respect and fairness. No person shall discriminate against another person through action, publication, or service.

**DRESS CODE**Philosophy

Dress Codes are in place at job-sites and in schools because the focus of these environments is WORK. Inappropriate clothing is a distraction to others and negatively affects the tone of a work place. The guiding principle is that the school has a mandate to ensure that the learning environment is orderly and conducive to learning.

**ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend every day the school is in operation unless prevented from doing so because of illness, medical/dental appointments, bereavement, or other unavoidable circumstances. Our data shows that students who have poor attendance (more than 20 days in a year) are less likely to be successful in their course completion.

**To ensure students' safety, please contact the school when your child is away, by phoning the school at 378-5131 or emailing [cfex@365.sd58.bc.ca](mailto:cfex@365.sd58.bc.ca) or returning with a note signed by the parent/guardian.**

## **LATES**

Students who are late to class disrupt the learning of all the other students in that class. Students are expected to arrive at school and to all classes on time. Students late to school in the morning and/or afternoon will report directly to the office. Students who demonstrate ongoing truancies will be addressed as per the MSS attendance guidelines.

## **EARLY DISMISSALS**

For reasons of student safety, students who must leave the school prior to 3:04 PM, need to have a parent/guardian contact MSS or bring a suitable note. A student who must leave school early **MUST** obtain an early dismissal slip from the office. **Dismissal slips should be requested before school, at break, or at noon.** Students are **NOT** to leave the school without office permission.

## **FIGHTING**

It is expected that students learn to work out their issues in a non-violent manner. It is hoped that students will find an adult/student leader to mediate differences. Students involved in fighting while they are under the jurisdiction of the school or where the conflict interferes with teaching or learning will be suspended.

Merritt Secondary School further believes that other students, while not directly involved in fights, can play an active role by:

- 1) arranging for fights to take place,
- 2) filming fights, or
- 3) encouraging **participants through their attendance at fights.**

Those students will also face suspensions and/or loss of school privileges for any of the above actions.

## **BULLYING**

Because we value respect, fairness and compassion, students are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner free of all forms of harassment including sexual harassment. Students will refrain from any behaviour that discriminates against others on the basis of gender, race, religion or sexual orientation.

The Administration and staff expect the environment at MSS to be free of bullying. We take a strong stance against acts of bullying. However, it is very difficult for victims of bullying to know what to do or where to turn. There is a fear that reporting cases of bullying may only make situations worse. We have been very successful at getting bullies to stop. Students who are the victims of bullying are encouraged to report the incidences to a counselor or administrator. Students should keep any threatening emails, texts, facebook posts, etc. as evidence of bullying or harassment. They can expect the matter to be dealt with promptly by the administration and support staff in the school.

## **COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE**

The school provides access to the school network and internet to students who require these tools for educational purposes. Students wishing to gain access must hand in a signed (by a parent or legal guardian) internet/computer access form available from the library. Any student found using the school computers for inappropriate or illegal activities may have their computer privileges in the school removed, or may be disciplined by School or School District Administration.

## **SCHOOL DANCES**

Regular attendance is expected at Merritt Secondary School. Students who are absent from one or more classes on the day of a school dance may be refused admission to the dance. Dances are privileges and students may be refused entry for a variety of reasons including poor behavior or attendance concerns.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Parents of students can positively affect the school-learning environment by participating in the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Meetings are held every second Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 PM - all parents are welcome to attend. Parents can discuss any matter relative to the welfare of the student body, learn how the school functions, or listen to interesting speakers. At MSS the PAC has not been a fund raising body.

## **PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONCERNS**

Parents/guardians having complaints regarding their children's problems at school are encouraged to first contact the employee concerned. If satisfaction is not gained, such complaints should then be forwarded to a school administrator. If satisfaction is still not gained, then such concerns should be made to the Superintendent of Schools. Finally, if satisfaction is still not gained, then such concern should be made in writing to the Board of School Trustees.

## **STUDENT FILES**

A student file is started when a student first enters elementary school and this file is carried through until the student leaves and/or graduates from school. If a student transfers school within British Columbia the file will be forwarded to the new school. The student file is kept for seven years following the student's last participating school date.

Student files can be made available for parent viewing. Permission to view student files must be obtained through the Merritt Secondary School Administration. The student file

consists of report cards, educational testing information, discipline letters, interim/comment reports, parental custody reports, teacher and/or counselor letters.

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

### **COUNSELLING**

There are two counselors who are responsible for all of our students. Students may see counselors for a variety of services including academic, career, and personal counseling. Parents are also encouraged to contact counselors with any questions or concerns.

### **FIRST NATIONS SUPPORT**

First Nations Support Personnel are available for our students. They offer a wide variety of services to on and off reserve First Nations students.

### **LINK CREW**

The purpose of this program is to make the transition from elementary school to high school a positive one. Selected and trained seniors and juniors serve as leaders and mentors to grade 8's. Link leaders work with grade 8's extensively during the first week of school and meet again with their student groups to touch base, discuss problems, and plan social activities.

### **LIBRARY/LIBLAB**

The library collection consists not only of books, audio books, Kindles, internet access, magazines, videos, CD's and computer lab. All students are welcome to use the library.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Details on the following programs may be obtained from Special Education personnel, Counselors or Administrators: Learning Assistance, Peer Tutoring, Classroom Assistance, Community Learning Center, Distance Learning courses, Speech Therapy, Hearts and Hands, and district testing.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

The lost and found is located in the office. Valuables such as watches, rings, wallets, etc. will be held in the office. Report all lost or stolen items to the office immediately.

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Get involved! Students who participate beyond the classroom are known to be more successful and less likely to drop out. Here is a partial list of teams and clubs:

Volleyball	Rugby	Student Council	Climbing Wall
Basketball	Soccer	Golf	Weight Room
Chess Club	Grad	We Care Crew	

## HONOUR ROLL

The Honour Roll will be posted after each report card. Course percentages will be used to calculate honour roll status. In order to be on the honour roll, students must be enrolled in a full program and there cannot be any failing grades, “needs improvement” work habits, or “I’s”. Students complete a Distance Learning course and would like to be recognized for their Honour Roll standing, must bring evidence of completion, along with a percentage mark, to the Administrator by the end of the term in which the course was completed. Distance Learning courses will only be considered for Honour Roll status in the term in which they were completed.

86% and better	Principal’s List
80% to 85%	Honour List
73% to 79%	Merit List

## Honour Cord

- After the term 3 report card, diploma verification will be run for grade 12 students.
- From this document, by June 1, final marks will be used, unless the course is current. Final marks include blended marks from provincial exams. Current courses must be at least 75% completed.
- English 12 or Communications 12 will be included in calculations for Honour Cord plus the next most recent 24 credits (equals 6 courses) from provincially authorized and/or BAA classes. This includes TRU and SCIDES courses that appear on the diploma verification and addresses mostly what has been accomplished in a student’s grade 12 year. There is some possibility that some of these credits may have been earned in the student’s grade 11 year (i.e.: English 12 if they are a TRU candidate). Aside from English 12/Communication 12 courses from the student’s graduation year will be given first priority in these calculations.
- A student must have an average of no less than 80% for the above mentioned credits in order to receive an honour cord.
- It is the student’s responsibility to make any non-MSS courses known to the appropriate administrator by June 1.
- Evergreen students are eligible to wear an Honour Cord.

## **STUDY BLOCKS**

One study block per year is normally available to grade 12 students and must be applied for. Applications are available in the counseling office. Students taking less than a full time program will have their Honour Roll status affected. This may also affect earning an Honour Cord and Passport to Education.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES**

Many local, provincial, and national scholarships are available to M.S.S. students. Information is available on a regular basis from the Counselors and the MSS website.

## **GRADES AND PERCENTAGES**

A	=	86-100%
B	=	73-85%
C+	=	67-72%
C	=	60-66%
C-	=	50-59%
I	=	In Progress
F	=	0-49%
SG	=	Standing Granted
NM	=	No Mark

## **GRADUATION TRANSITIONS**

The Successful completion of all 3 components of Graduation Transition by the end of grade 12 is a requirement for all BC secondary school students.

Graduation Transition is an opportunity for students to reflect on their knowledge and abilities and plans for life after graduation.

The program consists of 3 components:

1. Personal Health
  - 80 hours of moderate activity after PE 10
  - nutritional habits
  - health management

## 2. Community Connections

- 30 hours of work experience or volunteer service
- connections between the experience and their employability and life skills
- identify self-management skills
- identify transferable skills

## 3. Career and Life

- complete a transition plan
- outlines career goals
- costs and funding after grade 12 associated with
- education, career & life options (financial plan)
- display examples of work applications, post-
- secondary programs, training, scholarships, awards, etc.
- presentation of transition plan, short and long term goals, etc.

Ultimately, the completion of all the components and associated paperwork is the responsibility of the student!