

# Parents Handbook

In addition to the materials contained in the Parent Involvement Guide and the Conflict Resolution Guide please refer to the Elementary and Secondary Student Handbooks, The District Crisis Response Plan and the Board of Education Policy Book.

## Parent Involvement Guide

### **Parent Involvement Program Guidelines**

The parent program in the Mackinac Island School District shall:

1. Involve parents/guardians of students at all grade levels in a variety of roles
2. Be comprehensive and coordinated
3. Recognize that communication between the home and the District should be regular, two-way, and meaningful

### **Parents/Guardians and Teacher Conferences & Progress Reports**

To encourage communication with parents/guardian, the Mackinac Island School District shall:

1. Schedule not less than three parent/guardian and teacher conferences per school year.
2. Provide no less than 2 reports of student progress during each 9 weeks period at the high school.
3. Provide weekly calendars showing academic and social progress at the elementary level.

### **Promoting/Supporting Responsible Child Care**

To promote/support responsible childcare, the Mackinac Island School District shall:

1. Ensure the availability of informative materials regarding responsible child care.
2. Ensure that the District provide parents/guardians opportunities to borrow the informative materials for review.
3. Ensure that each building plans and engages in other activities determined by the school to be beneficial for the promotion and support of responsible child care

### **Acknowledgement That Parents/Guardians Play An Integral Role in Assisting Student Learning**

To help parents/guardians to assist students during their learning processes, the District will ensure that each school will schedule regular "Parent/Guardian Nights" in order that parents/guardians may be provided with information about :

1. What students will be learning
2. How students will be assisted
3. What parents/guardians should expect concerning their children's education
4. How parents/guardians can assist and make a difference in the education of their children

### **Welcoming Parents/Guardians in the School**

To assist in welcoming parents/guardians in the school and to assist in seeking parents/guardians support and assistance, the Mackinac Island School District will ensure that:

1. The District will not implement any policy or procedure that will discourage a parent/guardian from visiting the school, specifically including:
  - a. Policies requiring parents/guardians to "pick-up" their children outside the school building each day
  - b. Policies prohibiting the parents/guardians from visiting their children's classrooms during events
2. Engage in other activities determined by the school to be designed to welcome parents/guardians in the school.

### **Parents/Guardians as Full Partners in Decision--Making**

To encourage parents/guardians to participate as full partners in the decisions that affect their children and families, the Mackinac Island School District shall ensure that:

1. The District will have available information regarding the process for resolving parents/guardians concerns—including how to define the problem, whom to first approach and how to develop solutions for solving the problem
2. Make every effort to inform parents/guardians of high school students how to be involved in the decisions affecting course selections, career planning and preparation for post-secondary opportunities

### **Assure Communication with Parents/Guardians**

To assist parents/guardians and provide information regarding school procedures, activities and events, the District will:

1. Publish handbooks appropriate to age and grade level
2. Publish newsletters, informational pamphlets and other publications on a weekly or monthly basis.
3. Provide information on the schools web site

### **Providing Specific Events During Which Parent/Guardian Volunteers Play an Integral Role**

Parent Volunteer Opportunities are available including but not limited to the following:

1. After School Tutor
2. Reading Buddy
3. Lunch Recess Duty
4. Library Volunteer
5. Organize Classroom Parties
6. Organize Holiday Events
7. Soup Labels
8. Field Trip Assistant
9. Mini-Lesson Teacher

## **Conflict Resolution Guide**

### **Step 1: Take your concern to the person closest to the problem**

No matter where the problem is, take your concern there first. Whether in the classroom, on the way to school, or on the practice field, the quickest and easiest solution is usually found with the staff member most directly involved.

It's best if you make time to talk with school personnel regularly, before problems are encountered, Know who your children's teachers, class advisors, and coaches are and how they may be contacted. Tell them when things are going well, and communicate any concerns you have quickly and openly.

If you call for an appointment to see your child's teacher, why not let them know in advance what the general nature of your concern is? This gives them an opportunity to ask other staff members for information that might relate to your problem or concern. If a personal visit isn't possible, why not call once to state the problem, and during that conversation, offer to call back at a time when you can both discuss the situation in more detail.

The problem you or your child faces may be the result of an oversight or misunderstanding that can be easily corrected once it is brought to the attention of the staff member most directly involved. Give them a chance to tackle the problem first.

## **Step 2: Present your concern to the next level.**

The Superintendent is responsible for supervision of the staff. The Superintendent is the next level of school personnel you should contact if the staff member closest to the problem hasn't been able to satisfactorily resolve the difficulty.

The Superintendent's ability to help will be improved if you share the steps you've already taken with the staff member closest to the problem, or if you will take time to openly share the reasons why you feel uncomfortable dealing directly with the person who is closest to the situation.

The superintendent will rarely have ready access to the information they need to be of immediate assistance and working through them will often require additional time.

Keep in mind that the superintendent's day starts early and often ends late in the evening. Part of the superintendent's job requires attendance at area-wide meetings outside the district. As a consequence, a meeting with the superintendent will probably require some advance planning.

## **Step 3: Contact your school board members.**

School board members are elected to represent the interest of all parents and district residents, and you should always feel free to tell them your point of view. School board members do not, however, have direct authority in day-to-day school operations. All authority is the result of official actions by a majority of the board at meetings open to the public.

The board's primary responsibility is to make policies that guide the school district. Any change in policy requires two readings at two separate public meetings; a procedure that often takes two or more months. Some policy changes may require substantial public input and consultation with the school district's attorney. These requirements often increase the time required for the board to make a response.

## **So when should a board member be contacted and what can they do?**

Contact a board member:

- after other means to solve a problem have been tried
- when a policy is being enforced but you believe it results in bad consequences
- when you believe a policy isn't being enforced
- when policies or procedures are not enforced fairly for all

A board member may take one or all of the following actions:

- informally discuss the issue with the superintendent or other administrators to consider whether policies or rules should be changed
- request that the board review the specific policies that relate to the situation
- propose new policies for the board's consideration