2021-22

HARDING MIDDLE SCHOOL

PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

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**Harding Middle School**

203 East Euclid Ave.

Des Moines, IA 50313

(515) 242-8445

**Harding Website:**

Harding.dmschools.org

**Twitter:**

@HardingWolfPack

**Instagram:**

hardingwolfpack

**Harding Middle Schools Mission:**

The mission of Harding Middle School is to ensure a **safe space** in which **each student** are afforded **unique opportunities** to learn and grow.

**Harding Middle Schools Vision:**

The vision of Harding Middle School is to be an **innovative school** that **empowers each student** to be **academically, socially,** and **emotionally** prepared for life.

**Des Moines Public Schools Mission**

The Des Moines Public Schools Exist So That Graduates Possess the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities to Be Successful at the Next Stage of Their Lives.

**Des Moines Public Schools Vision**

Becoming the model for urban education in the United States.

**Welcome To Harding!**

Welcome to Harding Middle School! We are excited to have each one of you join the Harding Wolfpack. Although it will be different from past school years, we look forward to a school year of learning, growing, and problem solving. Our goal at Harding Middle School is to prepare you for life beyond school. Please stay connected to what is happening at Harding Middle School by following us on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Parents should also sign up for School CNXT to give and receive regular information from school staff.

-Christopher Schmit, Principal

**Harding’s Website: *harding.dmschools.org***

Please check our website for dates, times, and details about all events and activities at Harding. The webpage, which is updated daily, includes our calendar of events, the daily announcements, an electronic bulletin board with the latest news, and parent and student tabs full of information to help you navigate middle school. Save us to your favorites for quick access!

Des Moines Public Schools and Harding Middle School staff are consistently sending messages and updates via the School CNXT platform. Download the app on any mobile device or visit <https://cloud.schoolcnxt.com/> to stay up to date on the need to know information. If you haven’t registered your School CNXT account yet, call the school at 515-242-8445 to get your personalized code.

**Administration & Main Office Contact Information**

Phone – 515-242-8445

Fax – 515-323-8656

Email: [harding@dmschools.org](mailto:harding@dmschools.org)

Hours: 8:00 AM – 3:45 PM

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Principal – Christopher Schmit**  [christopher.schmit@dmschools.org](mailto:christopher.schmit@dmschools.org) | **Office Manager – Jenny Rink**  [jenny.rink@dmschools.org](mailto:jenny.rink@dmschools.org) |
| **Associate Principal – Michael Pentek**  [Michael.pentek@dmschools.org](mailto:Michael.pentek@dmschools.org) | **Office Clerk – Harmon Buchanan**  [harmon.buchanan@dmschools.org](mailto:harmon.buchanan@dmschools.org) |
| **Associate Principal – Shannon Camodeca**  [shannon.camodeca@dmschools.org](mailto:shannon.camodeca@dmschools.org) | **School Nurse – Mary Scuito**  [Mary.Scuito@dmschools.org](mailto:Mary.Scuito@dmschools.org) |
| **Student Engagement Coordinator – Jeanette Carrington**  [jeanette.carrington@dmschools.org](mailto:cassandra.kendzora@dmschools.org) |  |

**Core Values**

**Collaborative**

We will take responsibility when we make mistakes.

We will be kind when we interact with people.

**Professional**

We do our best every day.

We are scholars, and class comes first.

We demonstrate grit when faced with adversity.

**Respectful**

Kindness must prevail.

We will respect others' boundaries and property.

Harding Timberwolves are **collaborative, professional,** and **respectful.** We are **collaborative** because we work together and look for ways to support each other to achieve common goals and create a positive school community. We are **professional** because we understand that school is our job. We act, dress, and carry ourselves in a mature manner. We are **respectful** to others, our school, and ourselves. We respect each person in our building despite our differences in opinions, backgrounds, and abilities.

**District Equity/Non-Discrimination Statement**

It is the policy of the Des Moines Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you believe you have (or your child) has been discriminated against or treated unjustly at school, please contact the Equity Coordinator at 2323 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312, 515-242-7972 or [nancy.vanwyk@dmschools.org](mailto:nancy.vanwyk@dmschools.org).

**General Information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School Hours:** | |
| Doors Open | 8:15 AM |
| Breakfast | 8:15 – 8:30AM *(in classrooms)* |
| School Start Time | 8:30 AM |
| School End Time | 3:30 PM |
| Doors Close | 3:45 PM |

**Morning Arrival:**

***Student may begin entering the building at 8:15 AM.***

Due to COVID-19 precautions, parents are not to walk students to the door; they should remain in their car or on the sidewalk.

* All walkers and parent drop-offs will enter from the West side of the building through the following doors.
  + 6th: Southwest Doors
  + 7th: Northwest Doors
  + 8th: Middle West Doors
* All bus riders will enter from the East side of the building through the following doors:
  + 6th: Southeast Doors
  + 7th: Northeast Doors
  + 8th: Middle West Doors

**No students are allowed through the main doors near the parking lot and office.**

Exiting the Building Protocols

* Staggered Dismissal
* Green Team 3:25
  + 6th South Doors
  + 7th North Doors
  + 8th Middle Doors
* Purple Team 3:30
  + 6th South Doors
  + 7th North Doors
  + 8th Middle Doors

**Breakfast**

Breakfast is served from 8:15 AM to 8:25 AM in the student’s Pack Meeting classroom. Students will pick up breakfast in their grade level hallways as they enter the building.

**Dismissal**

Students will exit the building through the same door that they entered. To provide social distancing measures, we will be conducting a staggered dismissal.

* Green Team 3:25
  + 6th South Doors
  + 7th North Doors
  + 8th Middle Doors
* Purple Team 3:30
  + 6th South Doors
  + 7th North Doors
  + 8th Middle Doors

All walkers and parent-pickup will be done on the West side, like drop-off. All bus riders will exit through the East doors where they entered.

PARENTS: If students are being picked up before 3:25, guardians should enter through the main office to sign out the student(s).

\*\*Unless students are under the direct supervision of an adult (homework help, clubs activities), all students need to exit the building by 3:45 PM. If families are looking for an after-school club or activity option, please check the website.

**Bell Schedule:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Building Schedule** | | | |
| **Doors open at 8:15** | | | |
| 1 | 8:30 | 9:35 | \*\*1st 10 minutes are HR |
| 2 | 9:38 | 10:33 |  |
| 3 | 10:36 | 11:29 | 6 Advisory/Lunch |
| 4 | 11:32 | 12:27 | 8 Advisory/Lunch |
| 5 | 12:30 | 1:26 | 7 Advisory/Lunch |
| 6 | 1:29 | 2:25 |  |
| 7 | 2:28 | 3:25 |  |

# School Attendance Procedures

Attendance is the foundation for learning and achievement. If children do not show up for school regularly, they miss out on fundamental reading and math skills and the chance to build a habit of good attendance that will carry them into post-secondary opportunities. Excused and unexcused absences count toward a student’s total absence minutes.

Parents should make every attempt to notify the school in a timely manner when their child will be gone from school.

Teachers will take attendance within the first 10 minutes of class and update at the end of each class.

**Excused Absences:**

Excused absences are defined as:

· Medical appointment (notes are encouraged)

· Medical injury

· Illness excused by parent/guardian

· Illness excused by health care provider

· Other than medical/illness. Examples: a religious holiday; court; death or illness in immediate family; other as approved by school administrator, such as college visits, weather related incidents

· In-school suspension

· Out-of-school suspension

**Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences are defined as all other absences. Examples include skipping school, babysitting, family vacations, gone without contact.

When a student reaches 10 days absent (excused and unexcused) during a school year, for any reason, a school may request, in writing, that a parent provide medical excusal documentation for further absences. Medical excusals may be provided by the school nurse or doctor’s office. If the student continues to be absent without medical excusal, the absences will be considered unexcused. Schools must provide this request in writing using the 10-day letter.

**Tardy to school/Early leave. Tardy to class**

Elementary/Middle School –

· Students who arrives late to school after the first bell will be considered tardy.

· Students who do not arrive to their class after the bell will be considered absent, the number of minutes will accumulate to an overall total minutes absent.

· Students who leave school before the last bell of the day will be considered absent for the time missed, the number of minutes will accumulate to an overall total minutes absent.

**Excessive and Consecutive Absences**

Excessive absences are defined as five or more absences (excused and/or unexcused) in a semester. Building-based teams will review student attendance data on all students who have excessive absences and provide appropriate intervention as needed.

Consecutive absences are defined as full days in a row and are unexcused.

Schools will determine their response to absences. Examples include loss of privileges, attendance contracts, detention, etc.

Parents/Guardians will be formally notified of absences (including excused and unexcused) within each semester in the following manner:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Protocol for Response to Absences per semester (Elementary & Middle School)** | |
| Daily/unexcused | Office Manager/Attendance Clerk calls/emails |
| Daily/unexcused | Automated Dialer calls |
| 5 days excessive /consecutive | Teacher will make contact with parents-phone call home/email/messenger |
| 7 days excessive /consecutive | Tier 2 team will review for interventions |
| 10 days excessive /consecutive | Schools will send out letters, at team’s discretion upon review of attendance, to indicate further action required which may include, parent meeting request, required excusal by a health care provider, truancy court filing |
| 11 days consecutive | Student will be unenrolled K-6, dropped 7-8 |

**Standards Referenced Grading**

Harding Middle School uses Standards Referenced Grading to help students, teachers, and families know whether work in the classroom is heading in the right direction and pointing towards the goals and dreams of our students. The term *standards-referenced* refers to instructional approaches that are aligned to learning standards- i.e., written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education. In other words, *standards-referenced* refers to the use of learning standards to guide what gets taught and assessed in schools.

In Standards Referenced Grading, a consistent 4-point interval grading scale will be used. Letter grades, derived from this 4-point scale, will be based solely on achievement of course/grade level standards. Student participation, work completion, and ability to work with others will be reported separately using the “DMPS Citizenship and Employability Skills Rubric.” Students will have multiple and varied opportunities to demonstrate evidence of their learning, and accommodations and modifications will be provided for exceptional learners.

**What the letters mean:**

**NM**: Not Meeting Target - there is no evidence of the target, but work is attempted possibly with many errors \*If a student is refusing work, it should be marked as MISSING

**PT**: Progressing Toward Target - there are aspects of the target that are being demonstrated, but not fully or with some errors

**AT**: Achieving Target - the evidence provided fully meets the target described in the scale

**ET**: Exceeding Target - use the level 3 skills within the scale and apply/adapt at a higher level

For more information about Standards Referenced Grading, or for particular content and/or curriculum materials, please visit the Des Moines Public Schools website at [www.gradingdmschools.org](http://www.dmschools.org)

**Turnaround Arts Model**

Harding Middle School is uniquely the Turnaround Arts Middle School within Des Moines Public Schools. Turnaround Arts brings arts education resources to priority and focus schools as a strategic tool for targeting larger school challenges and opportunities.

At Harding Middle School, we use the arts to create unique opportunities for students to learn and grow. Students engage in arts integrated instruction to deepen their understanding of core content skills through connecting, responding to, creating and presenting music, theater, dance, visual and media arts. The Harding Middle School learning community employs community art experiences, beautification projects and classroom residencies with local teaching artists and Kennedy Center artists, including Harding’s PCAH Artists Actor Kal Penn and DJ IZ to prepare students for the next stage of life.

**Dress Code and Accessories**

At Harding Middle School, students may dress in a way that expresses their gender identity, cultural, and/or religious beliefs. The following guidelines are meant to assist students and parents in determining appropriate attire for school. School administration reserves the right to add or change the dress code as necessary. School administration also reserves the right to send students home if they are in violation of the dress code.

1. Tops and bottoms may not be revealing. Revealing clothes include clothing that shows undergarments, stomachs, chests, and private areas.

2. Shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes without soles, flip flops, and slippers may not be worn at school.

3. Students are permitted to wear headwraps and headbands; however, hats, hoods, bandanas, and sunglasses are not permitted.

4. Clothing which contains offensive language, hate speech, or clothing that promotes alcohol, drugs, or tobacco are banned at Harding Middle School. Additionally, clothing or accessories that are unsafe are not allowed at Harding.

5. All coats (and backpacks if they are a distraction) need to be in lockers during school hours.

**Phones and Electronics:**

Cell phones can be used before and after school. Once school starts, cell phones should be placed in backpacks or a pocket. Phones may be used during lunch time.

*Phones are not to be out or heard in classrooms without teacher permission*. If it is a time that cell phones are allowed in the classroom then a teacher will have a sign posted in the room that is visible for anyone entering the room.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| If | Then |
| Phone is out or heard for 1st time in classroom without permission | Teacher will give a warning to the student and remind the student to silence and put phone in backpack or pocket. |
| 2nd time phone is out or heard in the classroom without permission | Teacher will call student services to remove the phone for the remainder of the school day. The phone will be taken to the office safe and will be locked up. The student will be able to get the phone at the end of the school day. |

*\*Further and on-going violations of the cell phone policy may result in a parent/guardian having to pick up the students’ phone, meetings with behavior strategist and/or administration, and a student cell phone contract.*

# The Rule of 3

**The Rule of 3** applies to tardies, detentions, and night schools. Any student tardy to class **3 times** and any time after, will be issued a 30 minute detention by their teacher. At tardy #6, a parent conference will be scheduled by the classroom teacher. Students will have **3 school days** to serve their detention. If the detention is not served, parent contact will be made again and a referral will be made to the grade level behavior strategist or administrator, who will determine the next consequence.

**Common Area Out of Bounds & Hall Passes**

Any student not in class during their designated class time and who does not have a pass is considered out of bounds. It is all students’ responsibility to be in class. Being out of bounds may result in detention, or other consequences being assigned. If these issues continue, additional consequences may be determined by administration, including loss of passing time or escorted passing.

All students in the hallway during class time must have permission from their teacher and a pass. If a student is in the hall without a pass, they may be considered out of bounds. In an effort to engage all learners in instruction, students will not be allowed to leave the classroom for the first 10 minutes or last 10 minutes of class time, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Any student wanting to meet with any support staff (Nurse, Success, Social worker, Counselor, etc.) or administration (Office manager, Principal, VP, SILs,) must first check in with their classroom teacher. If a student does not have a pass to go see the staff member, the teacher will email or call the appropriate staff to check their availability, and then write the student a pass once the staff member is available.

# General School Information

**Pack Time Purpose: Pack Time is a safe and sacred space to build community and develop trusting relationships through goal setting and social/emotional learning.** The main purpose of advisory is to offer time for students and staff to build positive relationships. Each advisory will focus on building students’ social skills through group processing, individual goal setting, and self-evaluation. Topics covered include grade level goals, bullying and harassment, conflict resolution, goal setting, leadership development, peer-to-peer interventions, positive peer relationships, and student empowerment.

**Attendance at school functions** is voluntary and a privilege. All students attending must be in good standing behaviorally and academically. In addition, students must not owe any detentions or suspensions. Any student absent from school for more than ½ the day will not be allowed to attend any event that same day.

**Food** can only be consumed in the cafeteria (unless eating breakfast & lunch in the classrooms due to COVID protocols). No food should be visible during school hours (8:30am- 3:25pm) unless a student is transporting to breakfast (7:45-8:30am) or lunch (10:45--2pm). If food is visible, it will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day upon the student’s request. Appropriate use of gumis expected and may be allowed per teacher discretion. Exceptions may be made for special events and occasions determined by Harding staff. Students are able to carry a **clear water bottle** with them to class. The container must be clear and only water is allowed to be consumed during instructional time. Only student lunches should be stored in academic lockers. No other food should be stored in school lockers.

**Binders** should be carried by students every day. Binders will hold individual needed materials for class each day. If binders are lost, students will be charged $5 to their account for the replacement from the school. Students must pay $5 for each replacement thereafter. Students will be provided with instructional materials in their binder.

**Wolf Pack** is Harding’s student leadership group. Students in Wolf Pack have taken a pledge to model our CPR norms and to be positive leaders among their peers. Our expectation is that Wolf Pack members support building wide norms and expectations, model positive behavior, and work with staff to solve problems when they arise. Students interested in joining Wolf Pack should work with their advisory teacher.

# Activity Code of Conduct and Program Information

**Harding Athletics Philosophy:** AtHarding Middle School, we believe that interscholastic and intramural athletics supplementthe curricular program to become a vital part of a student’s total educational experiences. These experiences contribute to the development of learning skills and emotional patterns that enable the student to maximize their education. **Student participation in any part of our activities program is a privilege which carries responsibilities to the school, the activity, the student body, the community, and to each student.** Commitment, loyalty, comradery, discipline, citizenship and sportsmanship will be fostered through participation and experience. This participation will enable the student to develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.

**Program Goals:** The ultimate goals of the athletic program are torealize the value of a team and individual skill development without overemphasizing the concept of winning; and todevelop and improve positive citizenship traits among the program’s participants.

**Requirements to Participate:**

1. Students must have a current sports physical performed by a doctor on file with the school nurse. Students will not be able to participate in practice until the nurse has a physical on file.
2. DMPS Athletic Registration Form (Complete during school registration or using separate form) Link [Here](https://dmschools.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6RTZs6tbFfHWxDL)
3. Student Expectations / Player Contract (bottom of this form)
4. District activity fee paid $15 per sport with max of $45 per student. NO student will be turned away due to inability to pay.

**Season Timeline:**

1. Athletic practices will be held Monday-Friday after school; Activities will be scheduled by each individual sponsor
2. Coaches and sponsors will determine start and end time for practices/meetings
3. A complete game/practice schedule, coaches’ contact information, and general guidelines will be handed out at pre-season parent meeting and/or the first practice

**Student Expectations / Player Contract:**

1. **Attendance**
   1. Unexcused absences may affect participation time (includes tardies and/or truancy)
   2. Examples of excused absences are doctor appointments, absent from school, working with a teacher per their request. (Must provide a note from doctor or teacher upon return.)
   3. Students must be present at school for at least half the day in order to participate in that day’s contest, event, practice, or meeting.
2. **Academics**
   1. Students who are not meeting academic expectations, which includes missing assignments and failing grades, are expected to make up time/work after school which may result in missed practice/meeting time and/or missed participation time. School staff will work with coaches/sponsors to create a plan that is in the best interest of the student.
3. **Behavior**
   1. Level 2 or higher referral may result in missed participation time
   2. Suspension from school will result in student being suspended from at least 1 event/game
   3. Students serving game suspension will not travel to the away games with the team
4. **Transportation**
   1. It is the expectation that every student has made arrangements for transportation immediately following practices, meetings, events, or games in advance. Students should wait in designated areas. Please make every effort to pick up your student within 15 minutes after the event is scheduled to be over.
   2. After away games, players may only ride home with their parent/guardian. Players riding home with their parent/guardian must sign out with the coach prior to leaving. All other players will ride the bus back to school.
5. **Sportsmanship**
   1. All students will represent their school with pride and appropriate sportsmanship. Failure to do so may result in lost participation time.

**Athletic Uniform Policy:**

All uniform equipment must be returned to coach at end of season or a monetary fine will be added to the students account to cover replacement cost of those lost or not returned items.

**Physical exams and insurance requirements:** Regulations of the Department of Education, IHSAA and the IGHSAU states: The school shall require of each student participating in athletics a physician’s certificate stating that he or she is physically able to participate in athletic contests of his or her school. The medical certificate is valid for the purpose of this rule for one calendar year. This certificate must be on file before the student will be allowed to practice with any of the high school/middle school’s athletic teams. Another regulation states: A student shall not be permitted to practice or compete for a school until it has verification that he or she has basic athletic insurance coverage. School district rule requires filing of an “Assumption of Risk” form by the student and parent/guardian before participation will be permitted.

**Statement of Non-Discrimination for Gender Identity**

*The Des Moines Independent Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices.*

The District strives to create a supportive environment for its students. Discrimination, harassment, and bullying of students for any reason, including on the basis of gender identity and/or sexual orientation are prohibited by state law and District policy. Students who believe they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, bullying, or harassment should refer to school administration to file or make an internal complaint.

Complaints of discrimination or harassment based on a student’s actual or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation must be handled in accordance with District Policy.

Definitions

1. Gender identity: A person’s gender-related identity, which may be the same as or different from the person’s sex assigned at birth.
2. Transgender: an umbrella term used to describe a person whose gender identity or gender expression is different from that traditionally associated with the assigned sex at birth.
3. Sexual orientation: an individual’s enduring pattern of physical, romantic, or other attraction to another person. Sexual orientation is not the same as gender identity.

Privacy

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), only those District employees with a legitimate educational interest are permitted to access a student’s records. Absent consent from the parent or adult student (18 years or older), information contained in a student’s records, including information regarding a student’s sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or transgender status may only be disclosed under the limited circumstances set forth in FERPA.

Students have the ability to discuss and express their gender identity openly and decide when, with whom, and how much of their private information to share with others. Schools should work closely with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to devise an appropriate plan regarding the confidentiality of the student’s gender identity.

Requesting Support

The District recognizes that it is a highly personal decision for a student to determine whether they identify with a different gender than their sex assigned at birth. Students are encouraged to speak with a building administrator or guidance counselor if they need support or accommodations at school.

In some cases, transgender students may not want their parents to know about their transgender status. These situations must be addressed on a case-by-case basis and will require schools to balance the goal of supporting the student with the requirement that parents be kept informed about their children. The paramount consideration for school officials in such situations will be the health and safety of the student.

Student Names and Pronouns

Every student is entitled to be addressed by the name and pronoun that correspond to the student’s identity including gender identity that is consistently asserted at school. Students are not required to obtain parental consent or a court-ordered name or gender change as a prerequisite to being addressed by the name and pronoun that correspond to their gender identity. Teachers and school staff should be made aware of and honor a student’s request to be referred to by their preferred name and gender that correspond to their gender identity.

District-Maintained Records

The District may be required to maintain certain records including the student’s name and sex assigned at birth (including, but not limited to, the student’s permanent record). These records will only be maintained and used as required by law, policy, or rule, and will only be disclosed in accordance with such law, policy, or rule.

Any student, regardless of gender identity, must file appropriate court documents to get their legal name changed in their permanent record. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a parent or eligible student may ask to have the student’s education records amended if they are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of a student’s privacy rights. The District will respond to requests to amend information in student records for transgender students consistent with how other students’ records are amended.

Other than documents where the students name and sex assigned at birth are required to be listed, any reference to the student’s name and gender should match the gender identity of the student.

Student “directory information,” as defined by FERPA, is information that may generally be disclosed without prior consent from the parent or eligible student. Directory information is defined by District policy and families must receive notice each year of their rights under FERPA. Directory information shall not be used by the District in any way that intrudes on the privacy interests of students with respect to gender identity.

Restrooms and Locker Rooms

Administrators should discuss options available to the student and parent(s), including the use of the restroom or locker room of the gender with which the student identifies. While open discussions about safety, comfort-levels, and other situations are helpful, the student should be allowed to use the facility that corresponds to the student’s gender identity. Students, including but not limited to transgender students, who are uncomfortable using a restroom deemed available for more than one person or for a particular gender should be provided with a safe alternative, such as a single gender-neutral restroom. Transgender students will not be required to use a separate or single-use facility if they do not voluntarily wish to do so.

In locker rooms that involve undressing in front of others, any student who voluntarily wishes to have additional privacy, regardless of that student’s sex or gender identity, will be provided with an accommodation that best meets the needs and privacy concerns of that student. These accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

1. Use of a private area in a larger room such as a bathroom stall in a multi-user restroom, an area separated by a curtain, or a nurse’s or PE instructor’s office.
2. A separate changing schedule, before or after other students use the facility.

Extra-Curricular Activities and Interscholastic Sports

The District encourages participation in District-sponsored activities for all students regardless of their gender identity. In general, student will participate in sex segregated interscholastic sports consistent with their gender identity. However, participation in interscholastic sports may be subject to the rules and requirements of the Iowa High School Athletic Association and/or the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union. Participation in activities and sports will be determined on a case-by-case basis by a team consisting of the appropriate Executive Director, Principal, and Activities Director of the school. If there is no Activities Director assigned to the school, the Executive Director shall choose one from another school within the District.

Physical Education/Gym Class

Transgender students shall not be denied the opportunity to participate in physical education, nor shall they be forced to have physical education outside of the regularly scheduled class time. In general, students should be permitted to participate in gender-segregated recreational gym and physical education classes in accordance with their gender identity.

Student Dress

Students are allowed to dress in clothing consistent with their gender identity, including at school-sponsored special events (e.g., school dances, 8th Grade Formal, etc.).

Notification

Each building Principal or designee is responsible for ensuring that school staff and students are familiar with these guidelines

Questions/Inquiries

Questions about these guidelines should be directed to Harding Administration at 515-242-8445.

**State of Iowa Annual Notice**

**Notice: Corporal Punishment**, Restraint, and Physical Confinement and Detention

State law forbids school employees from using corporal punishment against any student. Certain actions by school employees are not considered corporal punishment. Additionally, school employees may use “reasonable and necessary force, not designed or intended to cause pain” to do certain things, such as prevent harm to persons or property.

State law also places limits on school employees’ abilities to restrain or confine and detain any student. The law limits why, how, where, and for how long a school employee may restrain or confine and detain a child. If a child is restrained or confined and detained, the school must maintain documentation and must provide certain types of notice to the child’s parent.

If you have any questions about this state law, please contact your school. The complete text of the law and additional information is available on the Iowa Department of Education’s web site: [www.iowa.gov/educate.](http://www.iowa.gov/educate)

**Bullying, Harassment, and Hazing Policy**

The Board directs the Superintendent to implement appropriate procedures and regulations to maintain an academic environment that is free from harassment, including sexual harassment, and bullying. The District will take action to halt any bullying and harassment and will take appropriate corrective actions, including disciplinary measures, to remedy all violations of this policy. It is a violation of this policy for any student, staff member, volunteer, parent or business associate of the District to harass or bully any student on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, military affiliation, socioeconomic status, familial status, or any other trait or characteristic, on or in school property or vehicles, and at any school function or school-sponsored activity, regardless of the activity’s location. Harassment and bullying are prohibited by the State of Iowa and this school policy. Violations of this policy or procedure will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. The level of discipline for each incident will be determined after considering the severity of the incident and any prior incidents. The Board is committed to providing all students with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect.

This policy is in effect while students or employees are on property within the jurisdiction of the District, including District-owned or chartered vehicles, and while away from school grounds if bullying, harassment, hazing, or any other victimization of students directly affects the good order, efficient management, and welfare of the District.

If, after an investigation, any student, staff member, volunteer, parent or business associate of the District found to be in violation of this policy may be disciplined by appropriate measures, which may include expulsion and termination.

**Definitions**. Harassment and bullying shall be construed to mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or conduct toward a student which is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student and which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:

1. Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or property.
2. Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s physical or mental health.
3. Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s academic performance.
4. Has the effect of substantially interfering with the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Electronic means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. Electronic includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, and electronic text messaging.

A person commits an act of hazing when the person intentionally or recklessly engages in any act or acts involving forced activity which endanger the physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or admission into, or affiliation with, any organization operating in connection with a school.

**Reporting**. All Des Moines Public Schools stakeholders have the ability and responsibility to report any act in violation of Policy 507 to school staff and/or district staff. This report can be written, made verbally or electronically and should be given to school administration or designee. An electronic complaint form is available via the Des Moines Public School website. The report will be logged in the reporting student’s communication log. Upon receiving the report, communication must be immediately made to the building-level bullying and harassment investigator.

**Investigation**. Once a report is received by the District (building-level bullying and harassment investigator), an investigation will begin immediately. Investigators will consider the totality of circumstances presented in determining whether conduct objectively constitutes harassment or bullying. If the reporting student’s perception of the acts matches Iowa Code 280.28, an investigation is required and must be completed as promptly as possible by the building-level investigator. All investigations must begin and finish at the building level. Building-level investigators may consult with District Administration for guidance and compliance. Investigators will ensure safety and confidentiality during the investigation. In addition, investigators will collect formal statements from the complainant, accused and can collect formal statements from witnesses, students, staff and adults. Complainants and accused students and guardians will receive a written summary notifying them of the findings of the investigation and next steps outlined by the school.

**No Retaliation or False Accusation**. No person shall retaliate against a student or other person because the student or other person has filed a discrimination or harassment complaint, assisted or participated in an investigation, or has opposed language or conduct that violates this policy, as long as the participation or action was done in good faith. Persons who engage in retaliation or who knowingly file false complaints or give false statements in an investigation shall be subject to discipline up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

**Notification**. Notice of this policy shall be communicated to staff, students, and parents of the District and to the District community. It shall be included in handbooks including those for students, staff, and volunteers; posted on the District’s website; and published in any such manner as deemed appropriate.

**Training**. The District shall educate staff, parents, and students about harassment and bullying, effective methods of prevention, and what to do in the event of such actions. Each building will appoint, at a minimum, one staff member to be the building-level bullying and harassment investigator. The District shall participate in assessments of the effectiveness of this policy and education programs and shall make reports as required.

**Other** **Agencies**. Students, parents, and employees may also contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission; the Des Moines Human Rights Commission; the Region VII Office for Civil Rights within the United States Department of Education in Chicago, Illinois; or the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in Chicago, Illinois for assistance.

*Legal Reference: Code of Iowa, section 280.28*

*Code of Iowa, sections 216.9; 280.3 (2013)*

*281 Iowa Administrative Code 12.3(6)*

*Adopted: 2007; Revised 2014; Revised 2017*