



**Mesquite Learning Academy**  
**CAMPUS POLICIES**  
**2025-2026**

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## ***INTRODUCTION***

This Handbook provides key information regarding Mesquite Learning Academy policies and workplace standards for employees. It is intended to be an internal reference tool for Mesquite's staff and is presented for informational purposes only. There may be some policies or procedures unique to your specific work area that will be explained by your supervisor. In certain circumstances, a Handbook Supplement for your work area may supersede this Employee Handbook. Additionally, some policies are modified for staff employed only during the academic year.

The content of this Handbook, and any other communication by Mesquite Learning Academy representatives, written or oral, is not intended to generate contractual obligations or rights between the Mesquite Learning Academy and its employees. This Handbook does not alter the at-will nature of an individual's employment with Mesquite Learning Academy, or in any way create a promise of continued employment. An employee or the Mesquite Learning Academy may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason.

The policies stated herein are subject to change at any time at the sole discretion of the School Board. This Handbook is intended to be a summary guide and cannot address every question that might develop during your employment. Your supervisor and the Human Resources staff welcome the opportunity to answer your questions.

This version of the Campus Policies supersedes all prior versions issued by Mesquite Learning Academy and is effective August 2025.

### **ACCIDENT POLICY**

No matter how insignificant an illness or injury may seem at the time of occurrence, you should notify your supervisor and the Human Resources Department immediately. If injury or illness is work related, complete an accident report and submit it to school administration assigned.

### **BREAKFAST**

Breakfast will be served in the cafeteria for all students at 8:00 a.m..

### **BULLYING POLICY & PROCEDURE**

Anti bullying laws passed in the Texas 2011 Session:

**SB 407** – Requires the Texas School Safety Center to develop programs that address “sexting” (*sexually explicit material or photos sent by text message*), and better responses to incidents of bullying and “cyberbullying” (*bullying through the Internet*).

**SB 471 and HB 1942** — Expands the requirements on school districts to address bullying and harassment, such as parental notification, programs for students and staff, providing counseling to bullies and victims and protecting those who report bullying. Charter schools also are required to adopt a policy on sexual abuse starting this year.

**HB 1942** – Expands the definition of bullying and allows school districts to transfer the bully to another classroom or campus within the district.

**HB 1386** – Requires the development of intervention and prevention programs to train school staff to recognize potential suicide victims, to include those students targeted by bullies.

#### **Bullying:**

Bullying means engaging in written or verbal expression or physical conduct that a school district board of trustees or the board’s designee have determined:

- (1) will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

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Mesquite Learning Academy will take all allegations of bullying very seriously and will investigate all official complaints. Mesquite Learning Academy will take appropriate action against all sustained allegations. Any student who believes that they are being bullied or believes another student is being bullied will immediately report the acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or school employee. The student's parents, guardian, or teacher may also make the report. Both the individual and the alleged harasser have equal privacy rights under the law.

Mesquite Learning Academy will prohibit any retaliation against a student who, in good faith, made the report. A student who intentionally makes a false claim or refuse to cooperate with the school investigation will be subject to appropriate discipline.

The district will create an anti-bullying staff development that all staff must attend to prevent bullying from happening on our camp

### ***BUS/VAN USE POLICY***

Bus request form should be submitted **two weeks prior** to a field trip to administration, operation directory, and cafeteria department.

### ***CAFETERIA***

Teachers are to escort students to and from the cafeteria at all times. Please be on time when dropping off and picking up your students, so that we may accommodate all classes. Under no circumstances will charging be allowed for students or staff members. This means that all meals need to be prepaid or paid at the time.

### ***CELL PHONES***

Personal cell phones must be turned off during school hours, with the exception of your lunch and conference period. Cell phones will not be permitted in areas where a state mandated tests are being administered. Violation to this policy will result in an administrative write up and \$5 fine. Reoccurring incidents will be considered for termination of employment.

### ***CLASSROOM SUPERVISION***

Under no circumstance is a classroom to be left unattended. In case of an emergency, please the office and/or neighbor. Teachers will be expected to enforce the Student Code of Conduct and provide students with a set of classroom rules.

Under no circumstance is a teacher or teacher aide to make any type of physical contact with the students in order to maintain classroom order. Teachers will supervise children with dignity and respect in order to earn respect from the students and their parents.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Each teacher will be assigned a “mailbox” and an email address. Mailboxes are located in the teacher workroom or school office. It is the teacher’s responsibility to check their mailbox and email on a regular basis. Phone messages will be left in teacher mailboxes. All Mesquite Learning Academy instructional staff members will be assigned an e-mail address. Please check your e-mail regularly for any information disseminated from the front office. Please check your email before, during planning, and afterschool only, rather than during class. The Mesquite Learning Academy Email System is property of Mesquite Learning Academy and is subject to Open Records Act.

### **CONFERENCE PERIOD**

Teachers may be allotted one conference period each day. Conference period is for school business such as grading papers, planning, and contacting parents, etc. Teachers may be asked to assist the campus with any instructional or duty assignment as needed, teacher may not leave campus during conference period without administrator’s approval.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Employees may not discuss other employee’s confidential information (*for example salaries, medical information*). Gossiping is strongly discouraged and may result in disciplinary action.

### **CONFISCATED STUDENT ITEMS**

Any items of value i.e. jewelry, electronic devices etc. should be kept in the teacher’s possession or under lock and key and brought to the front office. Please be sure to label the item with the student’s name.

### **CERTIFICATE RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS**

All classroom teachers are required to complete at least 150 clock hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) during each five-year renewal period. Teachers are encouraged to complete a minimum of 30 clock hours of CPE each year of the renewal period. An employee who fails to meet the minimum of 30 clock hours of CPE may not be renewed for future employment. **NOTE: Only those professional education activities from approved registered providers will be accepted for renewal purposes.**

**Teachers are responsible for maintaining records of ongoing professional development.**

Professional development paid by the district requires to be submitted to the **HR** Department. Employees who fail to supply certificates to HR may be denied further professional development activities. Employees who resign or are terminated within 90 days after training may have all costs incurred to provide the professional development deducted from their final paycheck.

### **COPIER USE**

Copier is for official Mesquite Learning Academy business only. If our allotted number of copies per month is exceeded, then teacher access will be limited and the number of copies reduced. Students are not allowed to be in the workroom to make or pick up copies.

### **DUTY**

Teachers may have morning and afternoon duties throughout the year on a rotation basis. This may include parking lot, cafeteria, and other such assignments.

### **EMPLOYEE PARKING**

Mesquite Learning Academy makes every reasonable effort to protect an individual's property, but will not be liable for fire, theft, damage, or personal injury. Protect your property by locking your car doors. Walk and drive with extreme caution in the parking lot.

### **FACILITY REPAIRS**

Any repairs needed in our classroom or on the campus should be reported to the operations directory ASAP. Mesquite Learning Academy or its Landlords may make no repair or renovation where asbestos has been identified. Sites with asbestos must contact the Mesquite Learning Academy approved asbestos abatement vendor in order to renovate or repair facility.

### **FOOD IN THE CLASSROOM**

Teachers are not allowed to eat in the classroom during instructional time. Students are not allowed to eat or snack in the classroom. Students may not drink or snack between classes. Students may bring food or snacks for a scheduled classroom party (*please look at parent handbook to know what healthy snacks are allowed*). All students may, at the administrators' discretion, be allowed clear water bottles in all classrooms except computer rooms.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are an extension of lessons provided in the classroom. We encourage educational field trips for our students. The campus administrator must approve all field trips before being scheduled. Arrangements must be completed two weeks prior to the scheduled date. This includes modifications to the lunch program. A limit of two field trips per year will be allowed. Field trips may be denied if guidelines are not followed. Staff is not permitted to participate in physical activities during school-sponsored field trips.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Fundraising will be held as a school activity. Campus administrators must pre-approve all fundraisers prior to any contracts or purchases. Fundraising monies must be turned in to the school office following school procedures at the end of each day. Under no circumstances should any money be kept in the classroom over night or taken home. Teachers are considered financially responsible for any money in their possession.

### **GRADE BOOKS**

Teachers must keep grades and attendance up-to-date on the school district grading software. Your supervisor will monitor grade postings weekly. A minimum of one daily grade and one test grade per week (*exceptions will include on benchmark weeks*) are required per subject each grading period.

### **HOLIDAYS**

Non-exempt employees must work the day before and the day after the holiday if they are scheduled to work. Failure to do so will result in a written reprimand and may lead to termination of employment.

### **HOURS OF WORK**

Workweek schedule: Workday is 7:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m. Beginning, ending, lunch and conference periods may vary between departments and within your department. Your supervisor will inform you of your schedule.

### **LEAVE REQUEST**

Please utilize “Time Clock” to request leaves. Leaves should be requested 5 days in advance. Please make sure to send an email to administration staff and administrative secretary if you are going to be absent. If it is an emergency, please make sure to call or text administrative staff and administrative secretary, no later than 6:30 a.m. You are responsible for requesting a substitute.

Please make sure to have a substitute folder ready for emergencies. For elementary, you will need to provide 2 days of work. For secondary, you will need to provide 3 days of work. A red binder/folder will be provided to you. Please make sure that it is located in a visible place and not locked up.

### **LESSON PLANS**

Lesson plans will be turned in to your supervisor on a weekly basis. Lesson plan requirements include the objective of the lesson, resources used, how assessment will be measured and special program *planning* (ex. *ESL, Special ed., modifications for certain students — only use the student initials.*)



### ***LOCK-DOWN PROCEDURES***

Please refer to Emergency Procedures Handouts/Training.

### ***LUNCH PERIOD***

The lunch period for employees is 30 minutes. Exempt staff may be assigned lunchroom supervision duties during their lunch period. Non-exempt staff must leave their assigned area and take their lunch break away from their duty area. In no case may a non-exempt staff member work through their lunch period.

### ***PD REIMBURSEMENT POLICY***

Registration fees, hotel fees, and other pre-paid expenses need to be reimbursed to MESQUITE in the event the participant fails to attend the event.

### ***PERSONAL PROPERTY***

Under no circumstances will Mesquite Learning Academy be responsible for personal property left on the premises.

### ***PROPERTY — EQUIPMENT RECOVERY***

From time to time, employees will be assigned equipment, such as, uniforms, computers, LCD projectors, cell phones, keys, and other equipment necessary to facilitate their responsibilities.

As a condition of employment, all faculty and staff members prospectively authorize a payroll deduction equal to the value of the property to be withheld from any remaining pay due to the employee in the event they fail or refuse to return items as directed. Equipment may not be loaned to another staff member without proper sign out and sign in logs.

### ***RED CROSS CPR / FIRST AID TRAINING***

Food Services Employees, Coaches, and other designated staff may sign up for training as it becomes available.

### ***REIMBURSEMENTS***

Only approved expenditures may be reimbursed and they must follow the district purchasing guidelines. In no case will sales taxes paid be reimbursed.

### ***SOCIAL NETWORK INTERFACING***

Inappropriate and unprofessional depiction of employees or the school will lead to termination of employment.

**SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS**

Regularly scheduled School Board Meetings are held once a month. A schedule is posted in the administration office. Meetings are held in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

**Time Clock**

Non-exempt staff must clock in each day. Exempt staff must clock in and out every day. Failure to clock in may result in an unpaid documented workday.

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE ACCOUNTING**

Teacher must follow the Student Attendance Accounting policies adopted by Mesquite Learning Academy. Failure to follow accounting procedures is cause for termination.

**STUDENT FUNDS**

All money that is collected for student clubs, organizations, etc. must be turned into the campus office on the day that the money is collected. These funds are considered school funds and must be accounted for. Teachers are not permitted to retain funds at the school or to deposit student funds into their personal accounts.

**SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PROCEDURES/BENEFITS**

If you are in need of a substitute, a request on “Time Clock” needs to be completed and turned in to your supervisor. If an emergency arises, please call the appropriate personnel by 6:30 a.m. Please do not expect us to acquire a substitute for you at the last minute. Substitute teachers employed for more than 90 days during a school year may apply for a year of creditable service with Teacher Retirement System of Texas.

Salary: non-degreed, and paraprofessional - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per day; Degreed-  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per day

Substitutes working in the same assignment continuously for 20 days will receive an additional \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per day.

**SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS**

Texas Education Code 26.009(b) allows schools to videotape students without parent permission for purposes of maintaining order and discipline. However, under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the parent may only view the video if that child is the only student in the video. If the video reveals other students, then the parent cannot view the video.

**TELEPHONE**

Students must receive permission to use telephones in the front office. Staff should not allow students to use their cell phone during school hours.

## **TERMINATION**

Any employee that is terminated will be required to immediately collect all personal items and be escorted away from the campus. This policy is to protect the employee and the school.

## **Videos**

Teachers will submit an Instructional Video Request Form to be approved by Administration. The video should be included in your lesson plans. (See Appendix A: The Instructional Video Request, page )

## **WALK THROUGHS**

Your supervisor will make observational walk through during the year to monitor instruction and classroom practices.

## **WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

**Mesquite Learning Academy** requires its directors, officers, employees and volunteers to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. The purpose of this policy is to encourage and enable employees and volunteers of Mesquite Learning Academy to report any action or suspected action taken within Mesquite Learning Academy that is illegal, fraudulent or in violation of any adopted policy of Mesquite Learning Academy, to a source within Mesquite Learning Academy before turning to outside parties for resolution. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace Mesquite Learning Academy's unlawful harassment and discrimination policy, ethics and conflict of interest policy, and/or any other grievance procedure, and any applicable state and federal laws governing whistleblowing applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

### ***Reporting In Good Faith***

All officers, employees and volunteers of Mesquite Learning Academy are encouraged to report any action or suspected action taken within Mesquite Learning Academy that is illegal, fraudulent or in violation of any adopted policy of Mesquite Learning Academy (each, a "Violation"). Anyone reporting a Violation must act in good faith, without malice to Mesquite Learning Academy or any individual associated with Mesquite Learning Academy, and have reasonable grounds for believing that the information shared in the report indicates that a Violation has occurred.

### ***Reporting Violations***

If an individual reasonably believes that a Violation has occurred, the individual is encouraged to share his or her questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with any Administrator or Board member within Mesquite Learning Academy who may be able to address them properly. In most cases, the direct supervisor of an individual is the person best suited to address a concern. However, if an individual is not comfortable speaking with his or her supervisor or if he or she is not satisfied with the supervisor's response, the individual is encouraged to speak directly to Superintendent or Executive Director, or anyone in management he or she feels comfortable approaching.

***No Retaliation***

No employee or volunteer who in good faith reports a Violation or cooperates in the investigation of a Violation shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment or volunteer consequences. Any individual within Mesquite Learning Academy who retaliates against another individual who in good faith has reported a Violation or has cooperated in the investigation of a Violation is subject to discipline, including termination of employment or volunteer status.

If an individual believes that someone who has made a report of a Violation or who has cooperated in the investigation of a Violation is suffering from harassment, retaliation or other adverse employment or volunteer consequences, the individual should contact the Compliance Officer, Executive Director or any member of Mesquite Learning Academy's Executive Board. Any individual who reasonably believes he or she has been retaliated against in violation of this policy shall follow the same procedures as for reporting a Violation.

***Confidentiality***

Every effort will be made to investigate a report of alleged misconduct as quickly and discretely as possible. Because of the need to investigate the report, correct a problem or prevent future problems, Mesquite Learning Academy cannot promise complete confidentiality. The Executive Board has the authority to retain outside legal counsel, accountants, private investigators or any other resource deemed necessary to conduct a full and complete investigation of the allegations as it deems necessary and appropriate.

***Handling Reported Violations***

The supervisor, manager or board member who receives a report of a Violation from the complainant is required to notify the Compliance Officer of that report, except as provided below with respect to a report relating to the Compliance Officer.

The Compliance Officer, or his or her designee, is responsible for promptly investigating all reported Violations under this policy and for initiating appropriate corrective action to be taken if warranted by the investigation. The complainant may be notified about what actions will be taken, if any, to the extent reasonably possible and consistent with any privacy or confidentiality limitations as determined by the Executive Board at its sole discretion.

In the event the Compliance Officer is suspected of having committed a Violation, then the Violation will be reported to the Executive Director and the Violation will be investigated by the Executive Director under close supervision of the Executive Board.

***Accounting and Auditing Matters***

The Executive Board is responsible for addressing all reported concerns or complaints of Violations relating to corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing. Therefore, the Compliance Officer must immediately notify the Executive Board of any such concern or complaint.

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In addition, the Compliance Officer will advise the Executive Director and the Executive Board of any other reported Violations, the current status of the investigation, and the outcome or corrective action taken at the conclusion of the investigation.

**APPENDIX A: Instructional Video Request**

**INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO REQUEST**

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Information**

1. Name of Program/Movie \_\_\_\_\_
2. Length: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Viewing: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Items Needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: \_\_\_\_\_ (Only rated G videos)

**Instructional Value of the Program**

1. **Purpose**
  - A. Subject(s)/ TEKS: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. **Nature of the program**
  - A. Pre-Program Activity: \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Program Activity: \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Post-Program Activity \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. **Evaluation:** \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. **Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Denied:** \_\_\_\_\_