



2019 - 2020

Student Handbook

McKeel Academy of Technology

Kim Benson, Principal

Linda Acocelli, Assistant Principal

Dana Davie, Assistant Principal

Mark Dunsford, Assistant Principal

Alan Black, Director of Schools

MCKEEL ACADEMY VISION

We are a choice school that cultivates productive citizens to compete in the global society-educating students through relevant and innovative curriculum, the integration of technology, and real life endeavors.

School-Wide Educational Expectations:

Career Shadowing: Participation in all scheduled Career Shadow days is expected.

Senior Internship: To meet McKeel Academy of Technology graduation requirements, it is necessary for most seniors to participate in McKeel's Senior Internship Program. It's to be completed in the summer preceding their senior year or during their first semester as a senior.

Rock Around the Clock: Participation in Rock Around the Clock is expected.

Academic Performance: To meet graduation requirements, it is necessary for students to meet the following criteria each semester they are enrolled.

- Earn an overall final GPA of at least 2.0 for the year **and**
- Earn a final grade average of C or higher for semester 1 and 2 in English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies.
- High School students must earn credit for all scheduled classes.
- Middle School Students must successfully complete all scheduled classes.

*Additional information, along with complete requirements, can be found in our Program of Study Guide at www.mckeelacademy.com under the Academics tab.

School-Wide Behavior Expectations:

1. Follow instructions and established procedures in the McKeel Student Handbook and those given by McKeel employees.
2. Maintain a positive learning environment - be kind, courteous, professional and respectful.
3. Be prepared with the correct materials - agenda, paper, pencil, charged iPad, parent communication forms, etc.
4. Dress appropriately at all times.
5. Arrive on time.
6. Display good digital citizenship while using electronic devices - use digital communication appropriately, use appropriate digital etiquette and responsibly use digital interfaces and content.

Warnings and Infractions: Students will be notified for each offense of non-compliance of the School-Wide Behavior Expectations and it will be documented on the student's McKeel Dashboard. Warnings and Infractions will automatically generate an email notification to the student and parents/guardians, if they elected to have these notifications. As students obtain infractions, they begin moving up Behavior Levels and receive the associated consequences. Students along with their parents/guardians should frequently assess student behavior and their current Behavior Level, by reviewing the online statement. Directions on how to view warnings and infractions can be obtained at www.mckeelacademy.com/info/display/viewbehavior.

Disciplinary Referrals: A student may receive a disciplinary referral for misbehaving anytime they are on a Schools of McKeel Academy campus, during any McKeel related function (on or off campus), while using McKeel Academy equipment (on or off campus), or while on transportation provided by the Schools of McKeel Academy. Students receive referrals for repetitive noncompliance of the School-Wide Behavior Expectations, Serious Breaches of Conduct and violations of McKeel Academy Policies and Expectations. A student may be referred to administration by any McKeel employee regarding a student's misbehavior.

Serious Breaches of Conduct:

Any violation of these or other infractions listed in the Polk County Student Code of Conduct will result in a disciplinary referral and may lead to consequences up to and including dismissal from McKeel Academy of Technology. Polk County Student Code of Conduct may be downloaded from <https://polkschoolsfl.com/policiesandforms/>

- Abusive language or conduct directed at a school staff member
- Academic Dishonesty
- Arson
- Assault
- Battery
- Bomb Threat/Possession of Explosive Materials
- Bullying (harassment)
- Burglary
- Computer or iPad misuse; Violation of the Terms of Use for School-Owned Devices, the Terms of Use for Campus Data Networks and the iPad Policies and Procedures.
- Disruptive Behavior
- Drugs (sale, distribution, use, or possession)
- Extortion
- False Alarm
- False Information
- Felony charges
- Fighting
- Gang Activity
- Guns, Weapons, and Dangerous Items (ie. electric shocking devices)
- Hazing
- Indecent exposure
- Insubordination (openly refusing to follow instructions)
- Interference with the Educational Process
- Leaving campus/class without permission
- Other Serious Violations of the Law

- Possession of lighters, matches, or hazardous chemicals
- Pornography-Possession or Distribution (including sharing of inappropriate electronic images or websites)
- Robbery
- Serious Misconduct on a School Bus
- Sexual Harassment or Offense
- Student Confrontation with a Staff Member
- Theft
- Tobacco Products (including electronic cigarettes, electronic “vapor” and associated materials used for consumption of nicotine)
- Transportation (speeding, illegal parking, going to car without permission from office, etc.)
- Trespassing
- Vandalism
- Violence/Weapons (knives, etc. not firearms)

Behavior Levels and Consequences: Attendance to an assigned detention or work detail is mandatory. If a student misses a detention it may be replaced with a work detail and a missed work detail may be replaced with an out of school suspension (OSS). Student discipline for Levels is assigned according to the following information, however, administration retains the right to alter consequences as necessary.

Level 1 = 5 Infractions

Student’s 1st period teacher will make parent contact.

Level 2 = 10 Infractions

Student meeting with an Assistant Principal.

Student serves one before-school detention.

Level 3 = 15 Infractions

A McKeel staff member schedules the student’s teachers to a conference which a parent/guardian and the student must attend.

Student serves two before-school detentions.

Student may not be able to participate in field trips and extracurricular activities.

Behavior Warning Letter is issued.

Level 4 = 20 Infractions

Student serves one 2.5 hour work detail.

Student/Parent meeting with an assistant principal.

Student will not be able to participate in field trips and extracurricular activities.

Student is placed on a Behavior Agreement.

Level 5 = 25 Infractions

Principal discusses possible dismissal with the student and a parent/guardian.

Danger of Dismissal Letter is issued.

Student serves one 2.5 hour work detail **and** one before-school detention.

Level 6 = 30 Infractions

Student serves one day of out of school suspension (OSS.)

Students at or beyond Level 6 will receive additional consequences.

Reduction of Behavior Levels: To reduce a Behavior Level, the student must complete the following:

1. Attend 15 consecutive school days without receiving any warnings, infractions or referrals.
2. Obtain and complete a Behavior Level Reduction Request form from www.mckeelacademy.com under the information tab.
3. Within five school days of completion of the 15 days without warnings, infractions or referrals, submit the completed Level Reduction form to administration.

Rewards & “Paws-itive” Recognition: McKeel Academy of Technology encourages and rewards students who are working hard and giving their best effort. Monthly rewards will be given to students to exhibit positive behavior and academic success. McKeel staff and/or PTSO will also reward students for their outstanding efforts.

McKeel Academy Policies:

Zero Tolerance of Inappropriate Contact: It is expected that students control their limbs, hands, feet and mouth at all times. Inappropriate touching, pushing, shoving, kicking or horseplay is not acceptable, even if it is done in a playful manner.

Public Displays of Affection: Hand-holding and very brief hugs are considered appropriate displays of affection, as long as both parties are willing participants. Kissing, extended embraces, sitting on other student’s laps, and/or inappropriate touching are not permitted at any time while on school property including buses, or at any McKeel sponsored functions.

Medication: Students are not allowed to carry medication nor self-medicate while on campus, with the only exceptions being students with emergency health issues that have been documented and have completed all the procedures outlined below.

If a student must have medication of any type given during school hours, including over-the-counter drugs, the parent has the following choices:

1. The parent or someone designated on the emergency card may come to the school office, check in with office personnel, and give the medication to the student at the appropriate time.
2. The parent may obtain a copy of the Authorization for Medication form from the school nurse, health clinic aide, school secretary, or online at www.mckeelacademy.com/info. The parent will take the form to the student’s doctor/nurse practitioner and have him/her complete the form by listing the medication(s) needed. **This form must be completed for both prescription and over-the-counter medication. If the student must carry the medication for emergency, life threatening conditions, this form must expressly explain the need on the form.**
3. School personnel will not administer any medication to students unless they have received an Authorization for Medication form properly completed and signed by the doctor/nurse practitioner, and the medication has been received in the clinic in a prescription labeled container, or for over the counter medications, must be supplied in original, unopened containers.

Zero Tolerance of Drugs and Alcohol: It is the policy of McKeel Academy of Technology that the use, possession, distribution, or overt act in connection with any drug, controlled substance, counterfeit controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicative inhalant, as defined by law, by any student enrolled at McKeel Academy of Technology will result in dismissal of the student and as required by law, the appropriate law enforcement agency will be notified.

Academic Honesty: McKeel Academy is committed to maintaining high academic standards that require a high-level of academic integrity from all students. Cheating or plagiarizing on an assignment or assessment will be considered a serious offense and will result in a disciplinary referral.

Electronic Device Policy: Cell phones, iPads, and other electronic devices including headphones are only permitted to be in use while in the cafeteria or the pavilion directly in front of the cafeteria during the student's lunchtime **or** with expressed permission from a supervising adult within a class period. A student seen using any electronic device outside of the permitted times, will receive disciplinary action.

Textbooks, library and other financial obligations: An obligation is defined as school property lost or damaged by a student, and/or a fine or fee assessed by the school. Failure to provide timely payment for the obligation may result in the suspension of the student from participation in extracurricular activities included but not limited to sports, clubs, field trips and graduation.

Community Service: Community Service is a valuable asset for students in regards to college acceptance, for Bright Futures Scholarships and some school clubs and service organizations. Community service hours must be documented every quarter. Directions on how to review your community service hours report can be found at www.mckeelacademy.com/info/display/viewhours.

Student Dismissal/Pick-up: Students are expected to remain in their classrooms until the bell designated for their dismissal rings. Only students riding the bus will be dismissed at 2:23. All other students will be dismissed at 2:26. Student car pick-up must occur at the carline in the front of the school. No one will be allowed to be picked-up in the parking lots, across the street or in the bus loop. All students are expected to be off campus by 2:45 pm unless they are under the direct supervision of an adult. This supervision may be a coach, club sponsor, or tutoring teacher. If a student is found unsupervised, they will be required to go to the Media Center to participate in the after school study hall until pick-up occurs. Beginning at 3 pm, parents/guardians of students participating in the after school study hall, will be charged a minimum fee of \$10, then an hourly rate of \$10 per child, per hour. Charges are per hour and there will be no partial hour charges. This designated study hall will close promptly at 5:00 pm. Parents/guardians will be invoiced weekly for this service.

Coaches/sponsors may make arrangements to allow for students to participate in the after-school study hall in season during game days, performances, and for practice days/practice sessions, at no charge. This must be approved by the coach/sponsor in advance, except during the first days of tryouts. Siblings of students in these approved programs will be charged the full rate for study hall on any days they attend.

Bus Transportation: In order to ride a McKeel School Bus, transportation information must be completed in McKeel Online Office. Please contact McKeel Transportation Department for any additional information.

Rules for Student Drivers: Parking for seniors will be in the front of the school. Parking for underclassmen will be in the back of the school. Students must be in good standing with attendance in order to be permitted to drive. The speed limit on campus is 5 mph. All students must receive a parking pass to be permitted to park on campus. Students must park as to not block other students in. (Directions on how to obtain a parking pass can be found at <http://www.mckeelacademy.com/uploads/StudentDriverGuidelines.pdf>.)

Please be cautious driving to and from school along Grady Ave. Frequently there are traffic backups just before school and just as school ends. Please plan your time accordingly so that you are not late. You may not break traffic laws to avoid this traffic. This includes not driving down the wrong side of the road to pass car lines.

Failure to adhere to safe driving practices, attendance guidelines, damaging the parking area, and/or breaking any traffic laws may result in loss of driving privileges and/or parking pass. Any damage to school facilities due to student driving will be the financial responsibility of the student/parent. McKeel Academy and the Polk County School Board are not responsible for damage or loss due to parking on our campus.

Agenda Use: Students are expected to have an agenda labeled with their name in their possession at all times. Students must repurchase an agenda within three school days if their agenda is lost, stolen or damaged.

Passes: It is the student's responsibility to properly fill out passes, in ink, in their agenda and present them to a staff member for their approval signature or initials. Anyone found outside of class without a proper pass is to be considered skipping and will receive a disciplinary referral.

McKeel Wildcat Cafe: In order to provide support to our McKeel cafeteria program and to align with the National School Lunch Program, outside vendor food and drink is not permitted at any of the campuses of The Schools of McKeel Academy during student lunch time.

Lunch: Students are expected to maintain a positive balance in their cafeteria account. Students with charges exceeding \$10.00 will be provided with an alternate meal. Students must remain in the cafeteria to eat their lunch. Parents and guardians are the only guests that may eat lunch with their child. They must present a government issued ID in the office and receive a visitor pass/badge prior to entering campus. Food purchased at fast food restaurants may not be brought to students or dropped off in the office for students to pick up on their way to lunch.

Eating and Drinking: To help keep our campus clean and minimize pests, students may not bring outside vendor food to school. School breakfast and lunch is to be consumed in the cafeteria. Students may bring drinks in reusable containers with twist on or snap on caps/tops. Disposable containers that can not be resealed are not permitted. Students should follow classroom guidelines regarding consumption of beverages.

Uniform Policy: While on campus, students attending McKeel Academy of Technology are required to dress appropriately, as explained on the following pages of this handbook. All uniform clothing must be purchased from the MAT Clothes Closet, Risse Brothers website at www.rissebrothers.com or from the Risse Brothers Uniform Store located at: 2525 Drane Field Road, Suite 11, Lakeland, FL 3381, Phone: 863-940-9913. Anyone needing financial assistance in obtaining uniforms should contact their guidance counselor.

Students with uncorrectable dress code issues (torn, ripped or cut clothing, no belt, improper uniform, hair violations, inappropriate shoes, etc.) will be required to go to the office. Once in the office, the student will be required to change into appropriate uniform clothing. Students will be given the option of wearing clean items from the clothes closet, if available, or will have to call home to have appropriate uniform clothing brought to them. Students unable to get appropriate uniform clothing through one of these manners may be required to remain in the office for the day.

Uniforms must be worn appropriately as follows:

- All skorts/pants/shorts must be worn above the hip bone.
- Shirts are to be tucked in at all times, not rolled under.
- Skorts/shorts/pants are not permitted to be rolled up at the waist or at the hemline.
- Belts must be visible and fastened properly.
- Visible body writing and/or tattoos are not permitted.
- PE shorts and/or non-uniform apparel should not be visible underneath a student's uniform.

Regular Uniform:

General- No oversized or baggy clothing, no clothing displaying brand logos, other than McKeel logos and no clothing that is torn or tattered will be permitted.

Pants/Shorts/Skorts- (please note skirts are not allowed)

Must be navy blue, khaki or McKeel Academy Plaid. Shorts' and skorts' hemlines should reach either mid-thigh or the end of the fingertips when the students' arms are hanging to the side with their shoulders down. This policy is met if the uniform is unaltered, even in the event the two previously mentioned requirements can not be met. (A copy of inseam factory measurements is available in the office.) Three length violations will result in the student wearing pants for the remainder of the semester **or** for the remainder of the year if there are less than four weeks remaining in the semester.

Shirts

- Can be navy blue, hunter green, or white. Seniors may wear red.
- Must be McKeel "M" logo polo shirt.
- Must fit the student so they remain tucked in at all times.

Shoes- Must have a closed toe and heel. No sandals, flip-flops, crocs, slides, or slippers may be worn at any time.

Belts- Must be worn through belt loops and fastened properly.

Hair

- Needs to be neatly cut, professionally styled and clean at all times.
- Must appear in a naturally occurring color.
- Should not fall below the student's eyebrow. Boys' hair should not touch their collar. All students may use hair bows, barrettes, headbands, scarves, or clips to keep hair in compliance.
- Extreme or distracting hairstyles (hair carvings, eyebrow cuts, mohawks, Faux-hawks, etchings, etc.) are not permitted.

P.E.- P.E. uniforms are purchased from McKeel, worn only in P.E., and may not be altered.

Optional Apparel:

Undershirts & long sleeved shirts - If worn, are allowed to be solid white or navy blue- without logos, designs, or writing seen through the collar or through the uniform shirt.

Sweaters, Sweatshirts, Jackets & Hoodies

- Must be solid navy blue or have an official “McKeel” logo.
- Hoods on jackets should not be worn while on campus.

Piercings, Body Jewelry and Tattoos:

- The ears are the only pierced location allowed for jewelry. A clear acrylic piercing retainer may be used for other pierced locations. Piercings deemed distracting will be dealt with, on an individual basis by administration.
- Visible body jewelry and/or tattoos are not permitted.

Hats & Sunglasses - May only be worn with special permission for field trips or activities.

Other Accessories - Any accessory (earrings, rings, bracelets, necklaces, grills, bandanas, etc.) considered extreme or distracting to the educational process is not allowed.

Tights & Leggings - White or navy blue leggings or tights may be worn, but they must cover the entire leg.

Additional Unacceptable Uniform Issues:

Any clothing associated with gangs, bandanas, clothing encouraging the use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or violence and/or clothing associated with discrimination on the basis of age, color, handicap, national origin, marital status, race, religion, or sex will not be permitted.

Cold Weather Dress:

Students and parents will be notified, in advance, if students will be allowed to wear blue jeans and heavy jackets or coats due to predicted cold temperature. An announcement will be made in school, information will be posted on the McKeel Academy website (www.mckeelacademy.com), and on the McKeel Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/McKeel-Academy-of-Technology-162742483754881/?fref=ts>). Students without a “**heavy**” jacket or coat can layer appropriate “optional apparel” to stay warm. No thermal long john tops and bottoms, sweatpants, flannel shirts, pajama bottoms are allowed to be visible, though thermal long john tops and bottoms may be worn covered, under full length acceptable clothing.

Non-Uniform Opportunities: Not adhering to the following guidelines may result in loss of the privilege to participate in non-uniform opportunities. All clothing worn on “non-uniform days” must meet the PCSB Code of Conduct.

Full-time MAT Students with 4 or more per semester AP or Dual Enrollment courses:

Students may wear “McKeel” spirit, club, team or “McKeel M” shirts with uniform bottoms or regular blue jeans free of designs, holes, rips, decorative tattering, sequins, metal beading, laces, etc. For appropriate documentation see an Administrator.

Senior Students: Must wear a McKeel “M” polo Monday - Thursday and can wear blue jeans Monday - Friday.

Fridays: Students may wear “McKeel” spirit, club or team shirts with uniform bottoms. For a charge of \$1 (\$35 for the year, if paid in advance by 8-16-19), students are permitted to wear regular blue jeans free of designs, holes, rips, decorative tattering, sequins, metal beading, laces, etc. In the event that a student has paid for the year and a cold weather dress day happens to be on a Friday, no reimbursement will occur.

Professional dress: Occasionally administration allows students to wear professional dress at school. Shirts must be tucked in and belts are to be worn, if appropriate. Males should wear dress pants along with a tucked in collared shirt and tie. Females should wear dress slacks or skirts along with a dressy blouse, or they may opt to wear a dress. The hemline of skirts or dresses shall be no shorter than 3” above the knee.

Dress for rewards, field trips, team activities, special events, or spirit week: Team coach, club sponsor or school designee will determine and announce the dress code guidelines for these events.

Sports Team Game-Day Clothing: Each team will have designated Game-Day jerseys or shirts allowed to be worn with uniform bottoms **only** on game days to encourage awareness and attendance to games. Cheerleaders and Dazzlers may wear their designated Game-Day uniform only on the days that they cheer/dance.

Student Field Trips and Extracurricular Events: Students are expected to adhere to both the McKeel Academy of Technology Student Handbook and the Polk County Code of Conduct in order to participate in any school sponsored field trips or extracurricular events. Students who do not abide by these expectations, skills, and rules will be sent home at their parents’ expense. Should a student’s behavior, actions, misuse, or abuse of objects cause damage, the student and parents will be held financially responsible. In addition to behavior requirements, students must also maintain passing grades and must not be on attendance probation.

Attendance: It is a McKeel expectation that students attend school daily. If the student is absent for 50% or more of any school day, the entire day will be counted as one day of absence. Students who accumulate excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused, will be subject to review by administration to determine the causes and the appropriate actions.

Late Arrival to School Policy: Students who miss more than 50% of any class due to being late will be marked as absent for that class.

- **Tardy 1-5 days:** Students **do not** need to bring a note or be checked in by a parent, but all students must report to the office for check in upon first arriving to school after the late bell at 8:45 am and receive a pass to class. Parents should keep track of tardies and medical notes or other documentation on Student Absence/Tardy Form.
- **Tardy 6 or more days:** After a student is tardy to school for six or more days during a semester, the student and parent or guardian will be asked to submit their child’s Student Absence/Tardy Form along with medical notes received or other documentation during the semester. A review committee of one or more administrators and the child’s guidance counselor will review each absence and determine if it is excused or unexcused. The attendance records will be updated to reflect the findings of the committee and the parents will be notified. Beginning with the 6th tardy, and every tardy thereafter, students will need to bring a note to the office or email MatAttendance@mckeelschools.com when they arrive late to school and will begin receiving infractions if the tardy is unexcused.

Late Arrival to Class Policy: A student with an unexcused tardy to class will receive an infraction, in accordance with the School-wide Expectations. Additionally, any student who has five (5) unexcused tardies to any of their classes will be issued a before school detention.

Absences:

- **Absent 1 – 10 days/Year:** Students returning to school from missing one or more class periods or a full day **do not** need to bring a note to school. Parents should keep track of absences and medical notes on Student Absence/Tardy Form. Parents and students should also keep teachers aware of extended absences through email and must follow the make up procedures listed later in this document.
- **Absent 10+ days/Year:** After a student is absent for ten or more days from any one class period, the student and parent or guardian will be asked to submit their child’s Student Absence/Tardy Form along with medical notes received or other documentation. A review committee will review each absence and determine if it is excused or unexcused. The attendance records will be updated to reflect the findings of the committee and the parents will be notified. Beginning with the 11th absence, and every absence thereafter, students will need to bring a note to the office or email MatAttendance@mckeelschools.com when they return to school. Students who are absent for 15+ days per year are in danger of being dismissed from McKeel.

Truancy law: Florida law defines “truant” as a student who has 15 or more unexcused absences within 90 calendar days with or without the knowledge or consent of the student's parent or guardian. Truant students are reported to the Department of Juvenile Justice through an automated system for excessive unexcused absences. Florida Statutes require suspension of a student’s driver’s license when the student reaches 15 or more unexcused absences within a 90-day period.

Make-up work: In the event of an absence, it is the student’s responsibility to obtain missed work in accordance with their teachers’ procedures (i.e. Canvas) and additional contact with teachers may be necessary to clarify information regarding work that was missed. The time allotted to a student to complete an assignment should be a minimum of one school day following the student's return to school per each day of absence from the class. Students may be given more time only with prior teacher approval.

Check in & check out: There will be no check-outs after 2:00pm. Students who miss more than 50% of any class due to a check in or check out will have an absence for that class. Only adults listed online as being an emergency contact for the student may check the student out of school. Parents, guardians, and emergency contacts must present a photo ID in order to check out a student. **All students who are checking out must come to the office and officially check out/sign out with office staff, before leaving campus.** If a student needs to check out for illness or other reasons and the parent/guardian is unable to come to the school, the student may be permitted to check-out once administration has received an email (MATCheckout@mckeelschools.com). The emailed request must include a copy of the parent/guardian’s driver's license, the date, the time requested for check-out, and the student’s legal name. If the administration determines that the student should not drive, someone listed on the emergency card will be required to pick up the student and arrange alternative transport of the student’s vehicle.

Bullying: Bullying and harassment of any kind is not acceptable at McKeel Academy of Technology.

Bullying, according to the PCSB Bullying Policy, is defined as “conduct directed by a person or persons against another person on account of race, color, national origin, language spoken, homelessness, sex, disability, marital status, age, religion, or any other basis prohibited by law which is severe, persistent, pervasive and objectively offensive to the point that the prohibited conduct substantially impairs the victim’s participation in his/her employment, educational programs, school-sponsored activities, or any other activities offered or provided.”

For additional information on various forms of bullying, as well as resources on bullying you may access: <https://polkschoolsfl.com/bullying/>

For information regarding consequences against any forms of bullying you may access: <https://polkschoolsfl.com/policiesandforms/>.

Students who believe they have been bullied or have witnessed bullying should report the incident(s) to a teacher, guidance counselor, an administrator or complete the anonymous bullying report at www.mckeelacademy.com/info/bullying/report. When completing the report, a student should include as much detail as possible without using their own name in order for a thorough investigation to be conducted.

Pledge of Allegiance: Pursuant to 1003.44 FS students can opt out of reciting the pledge of allegiance with a written note from their parents. Parents who are interested in exercising this option should email, mail or deliver their note to Dr. Linda Acocelli, Assistant Principal.