



2026-2027

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Kim Benson - Principal

Noel Green - Assistant Principal

Michael Schweim - Assistant Principal

Emily Backes - Dean of Students

Michele Spurgeon - Director of Schools



MCKEEL ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT

Motivating, Achieving, and Transforming for future global challenges.

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.

At McKeel Academy of Technology, we believe that a strong, positive school culture is essential for student success and well-being. Our commitment to equity, inclusion, and academic excellence is guided by our four core values:

◆ Community

We believe that success is shared. At McKeel, *Community supports one another, celebrates successes, and reaches out to surrounding communities to serve their needs.*

◆ Excellence

Excellence is not a goal—it's a mindset. Excellence is evident through highly effective teaching and high-performing students who produce results that reflect this mindset.

◆ Integrity

We hold ourselves to high standards. *Integrity is the expectation to be dependable, honest, and accountable to yourself and others in all situations.*

◆ Leadership

We believe every student and teacher is a leader in the making. Leadership is cultivated throughout our school with opportunities for students and the development of teachers to reach their full potential.

Together, these values guide our efforts to ensure that McKeel Academy is a place where all students feel seen, supported, and empowered to succeed. We are committed to fairness and equity, meeting students where they are and providing the tools they need to thrive. We celebrate the diversity of our students and staff, and we work intentionally to create an inclusive environment where every voice matters.



Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

The MAT Student Handbook outlines the key policies and procedures that apply while students are enrolled at our school. While comprehensive, the handbook cannot address every possible academic, behavioral, or school-related situation. Some expectations are based on common sense and may not be explicitly stated.

Therefore, the Administration reserves the right to make case-by-case decisions regarding academic performance, student conduct, or other concerns, whether or not they are specifically addressed in the handbook. The Administration may also address situations that fall outside the scope of the handbook or are unclear. This statement serves as formal documentation to parents and students that failure to meet school expectations will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Our goal is to ensure all students are successful, and we believe that maintaining clear and consistent expectations is a key part of that success. The school is committed to holding students accountable and supporting them in meeting those expectations. These expectations are not optional. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact an administrator for clarification.

To support the evolving needs of the MAT community, the Administration may amend the policies and procedures in the handbook at any time. Families will be given reasonable notice of any changes through written and/or electronic communication.

The **Parent/Student Contract** and **Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form** serve as confirmation that you have received and reviewed both documents. Please complete and submit the Acknowledgement Form electronically via **McKeel Systems**. A copy of the form was included in your student's beginning-of-year packet and is also available on the McKeel website under the "**Information**" tab or at the front office. The form can also be found at the end of this handbook.

All students and parents/guardians must sign and upload the Acknowledgement Form by August 21, 2026. This confirms that you have read and understood the contents of both the Student Handbook and the Parent/Student Contract.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to a successful and rewarding school year!

Sincerely,

MAT Admin



(adopted from Ron Clark Academy -RCA)
#Wildcatstrong #WeareMcKeel

Students

1. Accept correction and advice and learn from it.
2. Show appreciation.
3. Don't procrastinate.
4. Seek to be a global citizen.
5. Pick up trash, use proper etiquette at lunch, and show pride in keeping the school clean.
6. Cheer for your classmates and celebrate their successes.
7. Be **CURIOUS**.
8. Show good character and make good choices, even when no one is looking.
9. Take advantage of the clubs, trips, lessons, and opportunities at MAT.
10. Avoid cliques and befriend all.
11. Realize that the **ENERGY** you place in your environment is the energy that is returned to you.
12. Apologize with sincerity and mean it.
13. Find solutions; don't make excuses.
14. Love your school and represent it with pride.
15. Do not feel entitled.
16. Always be professional and neat in appearance. Adhere to the dress code. Keep well groomed at all times; take pride in looking your best. Take care of your uniforms, supplies, etc.
17. Ask for help.
18. Speak the truth. At MAT lies are abhorred. The truth is rewarded, and it comes with respect.
19. Represent the MAT ideals of respect and discipline everywhere, on the court, in the mall, on the bus, and throughout your life.
20. Honor your character outside of school when using social media. Realize that nothing is ever really gone once it has been posted.
21. Be a **FRIEND** to get a friend.
22. Do not whine or complain.
23. Stand together against bullies. Never tolerate it at our school, and let it be known, loud and clear, when you are unhappy with that treatment that you witness.
24. Show appreciation and thank your teachers for great lessons at the end of the class period.
25. Seek to know your teachers and staff members better. You are responsible for developing the student-teacher bond as well.
26. Uplift each other and seek to make the world a better place. **EMBRACE SERVICE**.
27. Realize it's not all about you.



School-Wide Educational Expectations:

Career Shadowing: Participation in all scheduled Career Shadow Days is expected. Middle school students are scheduled for career shadowing on March 12, 2027 and High school students have career shadowing on October 9, 2026.

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

Rock Around the Clock: Each year the Junior class researches and prepares musical numbers to bring us back through the major musical moments of the 20th century. **All Juniors are required to participate in all aspects of this project, including the performances, as this is a MAT graduation requirement. RAC parent night is scheduled for May 26, 2027, and student performances are May 27, 2027.**

Academic Performance: To meet graduation requirements, it is necessary for students to meet the following criteria each semester they are enrolled. Failure to meet requirements will result in academic warning, academic probation, and/or retention for the student.

- 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.

Students are placed on academic contract if they receive a grade of F in any subject for the quarter and/or their overall GPA drops below a 2.0. Students on academic contract may be required to participate in tutoring services provided by the teacher or BYPASS to help them be more successful.

Academic contracts are reviewed at the end of each quarter. At the end of the quarter, if the student is found to have passing grades in all classes and a GPA at or above 2.0, the student will be removed from the academic contract. Students on academic contract are not allowed to participate in extracurricular activities, field trips, or other school-related activities. **All FHSAA-sanctioned sports have specific grade requirement guidelines for student athletes.**



Awards & Honor Roll Considerations: To promote academic excellence and recognize student achievement, McKeel Academy of Technology hosts an annual Honors and Awards Ceremony. Eligibility for recognition at this event is based on academic performance **during the first three grading quarters** of the school year. Parents and students will be notified if the student is eligible. The award ceremony will be held in May, prior to the end of the school year.

Eligibility for character-based awards will be determined by teachers. These awards are based on our core values: Community, Excellence, Integrity, and Leadership. Program Completers, Clubs, and Honor Societies may also provide awards/recognition.

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. Based on Florida House Bill 1537, students may carry ibuprofen and acetaminophen; however, if your student is a frequent user, it is advisable to have a backup supply in the clinic for those days when they forget. Students who are found to have unauthorized medication in their possession will receive disciplinary action.

If a student must have medication to be given during school hours, 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, the school secretary, or the following link: [Medical Authorization Form](#). 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, the need must be expressly explained 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.



School-Wide Behavior Expectations

All students are expected to meet the following school-wide behavior standards:

1. **Follow Directions:** Comply with all guidelines outlined in the McKeel Student Handbook and follow instructions given by McKeel staff members.
2. **Promote a Positive Learning Environment:** Be kind, courteous, respectful, and professional at all times.
3. **Be Prepared:** Bring all necessary materials daily, including paper, pencil, a charged iPad, and any required parent communication forms.
4. **Dress Appropriately:** Adhere to the school's dress code at all times (see the *Dress Code* section in the Student Handbook).
5. **Be Punctual:** Arrive to school and class on time.
6. **Practice Good Digital Citizenship:** Use all electronic devices responsibly. Communicate respectfully online, follow appropriate digital etiquette, and interact with digital content in a safe and responsible manner.

Student-Athlete Behavior Expectations

Participation in athletics at McKeel Academy of Technology (MAT) is a privilege, not a right. All student-athletes are considered representatives of our school and are expected to demonstrate exemplary behavior, both on and off the field. Athletics is an extension of the classroom, and as such, student-athletes must adhere to high standards of conduct, character, and sportsmanship. In addition to any FHSAA penalties, MAT reserves the right to issue school-level consequences for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Warnings and Infractions

- Each instance of non-compliance with behavior expectations will be recorded in the student's McKeel Dashboard and will generate an electronic notification.
- Notifications will be automatically emailed to students and parents/guardians who have opted in for email alerts. We encourage all parents/guardians to opt-in for these notifications.



- The first three behavior infractions **during the first quarter** will be recorded as **warnings (yellow)** in McKeel Systems. However, the following categories are exceptions and will be recorded as **infractions (red)** immediately:
 - **"Other (Teacher Use Only)"**
 - **"Other (Administrative Use Only)"**
 - **Infractions linked to disciplinary referrals**

The **"Other"** categories are used to document **repetitive or disruptive behaviors** that do not yet meet the threshold for a formal disciplinary referral but still warrant documentation due to their frequency or impact. These may include persistent low-level defiance or classroom disruptions that continue despite redirection.

- These infractions are intended to address patterns of behavior that require intervention before escalating to more serious consequences.
- Entries in the "Other" categories will be reviewed periodically by school administrators to ensure consistent and fair use across classrooms and grade levels.
- Students who receive **three infractions/warnings for the same offense** will be issued a **disciplinary referral on the 4th offense.**
- Infractions (red) contribute to a student's **Behavior Level**, which determines consequences. Students and parents/guardians are expected to regularly monitor behavior and Behavior Level through the **McKeel Dashboard**.

Behavior Levels and Consequences

Student discipline is assigned according to the progression of behavior levels outlined below. Attendance at assigned detentions or work details is mandatory. Failure to attend will result in an escalation of consequences. Failure to attend a detention will result in the student being assigned a work detail. Failure to attend an assigned work detail will result in the student being assigned an out-of-school suspension.



! *Infractions associated with disciplinary referrals are not eligible for level reduction.*

Level 1: 5 Infractions

- One before-school detention
-

Level 2: 10 Infractions

- Two before-school detentions
-

Level 3: 15 Infractions

- One 2.5-hour work detail
 - Conference scheduled with student, parent/guardian, student's teachers, and the Dean of Students
 - Behavior Contract
 - Restriction from field trips and extracurricular activities (levels 3-6)
-

Level 4: 20 Infractions

- Out-of-school Suspension (1-day OSS)
 - Meeting with Dean of Students to review and revise the Behavior Contract
 - Danger of Dismissal Letter Issued
-

Level 5: 25 Infractions

- Meeting with the Principal to review Danger of Dismissal Letter
 - BLRR process must be immediately initiated and completed
 - Out-of-School Suspension (2 days OSS)
-

Level 6: 30 Infractions

- Long-term suspension (5 days OSS) followed by immediate dismissal with no opportunity to complete the BLRR process.
- Student must return school-issued iPad.



If a student reaches Level 6, they will be dismissed from McKeel Academy of Technology.

Behavior Probation (Applicable to Students Ending the School Year on Level 5)

Students who end the school year on Behavior Level 5 will be placed on Behavior Probation at the start of the following school year. This probationary period is intended to provide a structured opportunity for behavioral improvement while ensuring accountability.

1. Duration:

The probation period will last through Quarter 1 of the following school year with a reevaluation to occur at that time.

2. Monitoring and Support:

a. Student behavior will be monitored by teachers, administrators, and student services.

b. Weekly check-ins with the Dean of Students and/or assigned behavior support staff (e.g., Mrs. Higgins) are required.

3. Behavior Expectations and Consequences:

a. Students are expected to demonstrate consistent positive behavior and decision-making.

b. If a student reaches Level 1 during Quarter 1, they will move from Behavior Probation to Behavior Contract.

4. Restrictions During Probation: While on probation, students are not permitted to:

a. Attend extracurricular events (sports, dances, field trips, etc.)

b. Participate in clubs, teams, sports, or any other school-sponsored activities

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:



c. Parents/Guardians are expected to monitor student behavior status via McKeel Systems.

d. Collaboration with the school is essential to support the student in meeting behavioral expectations.

5. Review and Status Update:

- **At the end of Quarter 1, students who have met behavioral expectations will be removed from probation. Continued support and monitoring may still apply as determined by administration.**
- **At the end of Quarter 1, if the student has not met behavioral expectations, a meeting with the parent/guardian and student will be held to develop a formalized behavior plan.**

Disciplinary Actions Overview

Detention

- **When: Held every Wednesday from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.**
- **Type: Before-school only; no lunch detentions are available.**
- **Missed Detentions:**
 - **Students arriving late will be rescheduled for the next detention day.**
 - **Students who fail to attend will be assigned a work detail.**

Detention does not involve missing instructional time and may be held on additional days as needed.

Work Detail



- **When: Thursdays from 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**
 - **Pick-up: Students must be picked up promptly at 5:00 p.m.**
 - **Missed Work Detail:**
 - **Failure to attend will result in an Out-of-School Suspension (OSS).**
-

Important Notes

- **Repeated failure to attend detentions or work details will result in further disciplinary action.**
- **Students serving OSS may not attend any school-related events or activities during their suspension period.**
- **Students serving OSS may submit formatives but will not receive extra time to turn them in. If they miss a summative assessment, *they will be required to take it immediately upon their return to campus.***
- **An OSS is considered an Unexcused Absence.**

Reduction of Behavior Levels

Students may reduce their behavior level by following the official reduction process:

To be eligible for a Behavior Level Reduction, students must:

1. Attend **15 consecutive school days** with **no** warnings, infractions, or referrals.
2. Obtain and complete a **Behavior Level Reduction Request Form** at the following link: [Student Resources | McKeel Academy of Technology](#)
3. Submit the completed form to **the Dean** after meeting the 15-day requirement. This form must be submitted within 5 days of completion or it will not be approved.

✓ **If approved, the Behavior Level Reduction will remove five (5) infractions**



that are **not associated with disciplinary referrals.**

Disciplinary Referrals

A disciplinary referral may be issued when a student is in violation of behavior expectations and/or McKeel Academy Policies while:

- On a Schools of McKeel Academy campus
- Participating in any McKeel-related function (on or off campus)
- Participating in cyber bullying on or off campus through private messaging or social media that interferes with the educational process on campus.
- Using McKeel equipment (on or off campus)
- Using McKeel-provided transportation

Any McKeel employee may refer a student for misbehavior. If a student receives a disciplinary referral, a printed copy of the referral will be sent home with the student for the parent's signature. To avoid an additional infraction, all referrals must be signed by both the parent/guardian and the student as acknowledgement of receipt and returned to the main office on the student's first day back at school. **Students who fail to return their signed referral within 48 hours will receive an infraction.**

Referral Categories:

- **Major Referral:** These include all serious breaches of conduct and behaviors that result in an out-of-school suspension or bus suspension. These result in:
 - Immediate advancement to a higher Behavior Level
 - Required completion of consequences for both the referral and the new level
 - Students that receive a major referral will not be allowed to attend overnight field trips and will not be refunded any payments that have been made.
- **Minor Referral:** These result in:
 - Three infractions (red), which count toward advancement to the next Behavior



Level

***Infractions associated with Disciplinary Referrals are not eligible for level reduction.**

👉 Directions to view behavior records are available at:

[MAT Behavior Records Tutorial](#)

Serious Breaches of Conduct:

Any violation of these or other infractions listed in the Polk County Student Code of Conduct will result in a major 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 found at: [Polk County Code of Conduct](#)

Pranks or Other Acts of Vandalism: MAT does not tolerate pranks of any kind at any time. Severe penalties will be applied to students involved in prank activities. Penalties may include Saturday work details, suspension, a referral to law enforcement, exclusion from student activities, which may include the senior picnic, senior auction, senior walkout, graduation ceremony, recommendation for dismissal, or other consequences as deemed appropriate.

Arrests and/or Conviction of a Crime: Students are expected to obey the laws of the community, state, and nation. Any student who is arrested, charged with, or convicted of a crime, other than minor traffic violations, may be subject to school discipline, which may include dismissal. **Students are required to report such incidents within 48 hours to the school administration for review.** Failure to report an incident may result in suspension, pending a decision by the administrative team, and could result in dismissal. **Any student arrested on school grounds will immediately be dismissed from MAT.**

Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy

McKeel Academy of Technology is committed to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment free of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Bullying in any form disrupts the educational process and will not be tolerated. Students who engage in bullying behavior will face disciplinary consequences, including, but not limited to, detention, work detail, out-of-school suspension, and possible dismissal.



Definition of Bullying

As defined by the Polk County Schools Bullying Policy, bullying is:

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 that is severe, persistent, pervasive, and objectively offensive to the point that it substantially impairs the victim's participation in educational programs, school-sponsored activities, or other school-related opportunities.

Types of Bullying

Verbal Bullying

Includes, but is not limited to, name-calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse. While verbal bullying can seem minor, it can escalate and cause significant emotional harm.

Physical Bullying

Includes, but is not limited to, spitting, hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing, or damaging property. Physical bullying can cause both short- and long-term harm.

Social Bullying

Often harder to detect, social bullying is intended to damage a student's reputation or social standing. Examples include:

- Spreading rumors
- Negative gestures or looks
- Exclusion
- Mocking or humiliation
- Encouraging others to socially isolate a student



Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying involves intentional and repeated harm using technology, such as phones, computers, or tablets. Examples include:

- Sending or posting abusive or harmful texts, emails, images, or videos
- Deliberately excluding others online
- Spreading harmful gossip
- Impersonating others or using their login credentials
- Forwarding or sharing offensive content created by someone else

Cyberbullying also includes the sharing, forwarding, or reposting of offensive messages or media—even if the student did not create the content. Responsibility is determined based on the student's intent, awareness, and the context in which the content was shared. Students who intentionally escalate or perpetuate harmful content will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

 ***Disciplinary decisions for cyberbullying will consider the following:***

- **Whether the student shared harmful content knowingly**
- **Whether the intent was to harass, embarrass, or isolate another student**
- **Whether the student acted in response to seeing harm or as a bystander**
- **Whether the student has a prior history of similar conduct**

Retaliation Is Prohibited

Students are encouraged to report incidents of bullying without fear. Retaliation against any individual who makes a report will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or dismissal. Retaliation includes threats, intimidation, or exclusion targeting someone who reported bullying.



Determining Bullying: Ask Yourself

To help identify if a behavior constitutes bullying, consider:

- Was the behavior malicious or harmful?
- Was it repeated?
- Did it occur at school, during school events, or through school-related communication?
- Did it disrupt the learning environment?
- Was there an imbalance of power or an attempt to create one?

Reporting and Resources

Reporting:

Students should report bullying to a teacher, counselor, dean, or administrator, or by completing the anonymous online report:

 www.mckeelacademy.com/info/bullying/report

Please include as much detail as possible to support a thorough investigation. Anonymous reports are accepted.

Additional Resources:

- [PCSB Bullying Info & Forms](#)
- [PCSB Discipline Policy](#)

Consequences

Students found in violation of this policy will face disciplinary consequences as outlined in the McKeel Behavior Levels and Discipline Policy. All incidents are investigated thoroughly, and each student's rights and the context of the situation are carefully considered.



Rewards & “Paws-itive” Recognition

McKeel Academy of Technology is committed to recognizing students who demonstrate consistent effort, academic success, and positive behavior.

- **Quarterly rewards** are provided to students who meet behavioral and academic benchmarks.
- Students may also receive "**Paws-itive**" **recognition** from staff, admin, or the PTSO for outstanding behavior, character, or effort.
- These rewards may include school-wide shout-outs, certificates, small prizes, or special privileges.

McKeel Academy Policies:

Questioning Students At School:

School teachers and administrators have the right to question students about their own conduct at school, in the investigation of alleged misconduct by other students, and to question them about the conduct of others. School officials will not ordinarily contact the parents or guardians before questioning their child about his or her own conduct or about the conduct of other students.

The investigation of possible violations of the Code of Conduct and Student Handbook is not a criminal proceeding, and there is no such thing as “pleading the Fifth” or a student’s right not to incriminate him or herself in a school discipline investigation. Sometimes, law enforcement officials or investigators from Child Protective Services may ask to interview students at school. In the case of an investigator from law enforcement or a state agency who is conducting a child abuse or neglect investigation, MAT officials are required by state law to permit the investigator to talk to the child at school.

Inappropriate Contact: Students are expected to maintain control of their actions and refrain from engaging in any form of physical contact that is inappropriate, including touching, pushing, shoving, kicking, or engaging in horseplay. Such behavior, even if intended as playful, is not acceptable. Failure to adhere to this expectation will result in an infraction or disciplinary referral, depending on the severity of the action or its impact on the educational environment.



Assault/Fighting:

Assault and fighting, whether or not they cause injury, will not be tolerated. These actions are considered major offenses and will result in an increase in the behavior level of the student(s) involved. Violators will be suspended and, in some cases, may face dismissal and referral to law enforcement officers, if necessary.

Students who do not fight back will not be subject to punishment. Those students should report the incident immediately to an administrator, resource officer, or teacher. Students should not take matters into their own hands but should allow an administrator to handle the situation. Students who are intimidated or harassed by another student should report this to a teacher or administrator immediately.

Students who instigate fights without actively participating (such as spreading rumors, encouraging others to fight, relaying information between parties, recording the fight, or reposting it on social media, etc.) will face the same penalties as those directly involved in the fight.

- First offense: up to 5 days out-of-school suspension
- Second offense: up to 10 days out-of-school suspension, followed by dismissal from MAT

Public Displays of Affection: Public Displays of Affection include physical contacts, such as holding hands, kissing, inappropriate and excessive touching, indecent exposure, etc. These behaviors are prohibited on school property, including buses, or at any McKeel-sponsored functions and will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Sexting: Sexting is the use of technology to send or receive sexual messages, including full and/or partial nudity. Sexting at this age, according to Florida law, is considered child pornography; consequently, parents and local law enforcement will be contacted immediately. Students engaging in this behavior will be suspended and may be subject to dismissal.



Threats and Intimidation: The safety and well-being of students, staff, and visitors are top priorities of the school. Any threat, whether verbal, written, electronic, symbolic, or communicated through social media, gestures, images, or other means, that suggests harm to a person, group, school property, or the school community is strictly prohibited.

Students shall not make, communicate, transmit, or participate in any threatening statement or act, including but not limited to:

- Threats of violence or bodily harm;
- Threats involving weapons, explosives, or dangerous devices;
- Statements suggesting school violence or mass harm;
- Written or electronic messages intended to intimidate, frighten, or disrupt the school environment;
- Jokes, rumors, or comments referencing violence that reasonably cause fear or concern.

Any reported threat will be taken seriously and promptly investigated by school administration and/or law enforcement. Disciplinary action may include suspension, dismissal, referral to law enforcement, and other consequences permitted by the Student Code of Conduct and Florida law.

Under Florida law, making written or electronic threats to kill, do bodily injury, or conduct a mass shooting or act of terrorism is a felony offense. Florida Statute § 836.10 provides that any person who “writes or composes and also sends or procures the sending of any letter, inscribed communication, or electronic communication... containing a threat to kill or to do bodily injury” commits a second-degree felony. Students and parents should understand that statements made in person, online, in text messages, social media posts, emails, notes, or other communications may result in criminal prosecution in addition to school disciplinary consequences.

Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use Policy

McKeel Academy of Technology maintains a zero-tolerance stance on the use, possession, or



distribution of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or any related paraphernalia. This includes school grounds, including parking lots, sidewalks, and surrounding areas, and extends to school-sponsored activities and events on or off campus. The goal of this policy is to protect the safety, health, and well-being of all students and staff while preserving a focused, drug-free learning environment.

Drugs and Alcohol Products: Use or Possession

A student who uses or is under the influence of or is in possession of or solicits for an intoxicating or controlled beverage, narcotic, any mood-modifying prescription drug, over-the-counter mood-modifying drug, or any mood-modifying substance or drug, or controlled substances as defined by Florida law, or represents any substance as any of those mentioned above, or accepts or is in possession of drug paraphernalia is guilty of a very serious breach of conduct, which shall be referred to the proper law enforcement agency and could result in criminal penalties. For purposes of this section, drug paraphernalia is defined as all equipment, products, and materials of any kind that are used, intended for use, or designed for use in injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing into the human body a controlled substance as defined by Florida law. In determining whether an item is drug paraphernalia, the school administrator should consider related evidence to determine whether a student intends to use the item as drug paraphernalia rather than for a legitimate purpose.

In Polk County, Florida, Sheriff Grady Judd enforces a strict zero-tolerance policy: bringing a vape containing THC or marijuana resin onto school property results in an automatic felony arrest and criminal charges.

First-Time Drug or Alcohol Offense Process

To provide students with an opportunity for accountability and intervention, first-time offenders may be eligible for the Phoenix Program in lieu of automatic dismissal if the offense is not a felony. However, if the offense constitutes a felony, it will result in immediate dismissal.

Option 1: Phoenix Program (Intervention Pathway)

- 5-Day Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)
- Parents must register their student with the Phoenix Program during the suspension:

○  Mark Wilcox Center: (863) 291-5355

revised 5/28/2026



- **Program Requirements:**

- Student completes an assessment at the Mark Wilcox Center
- Four self-paced online lessons
- Two joint parent/student lessons (parent attendance required)
- Completion deadline: 30 calendar days

Failure to register within 5 days or complete the program within 30 days will result in immediate dismissal.

Option 2: Decline to Enroll

If a parent declines the Phoenix Program:

- Student receives 10-Day OSS
- Student is dismissed from McKeel Academy of Technology

Repeat Offenses

Any repeat drug or alcohol offense will result in immediate dismissal without an intervention option.

Sale, Distribution or Possession with Intent to Sell or Distribute

A student who purchases, sells, or distributes, or attempts or conspires with someone else to sell or distribute, or possesses with intent to sell or distribute an intoxicating or controlled beverage; narcotic; any mood-modifying prescription drug, over-the-counter mood-modifying drug, or any mood-modifying substance or drug; or other controlled substances, including vapes, as defined by Florida law; or sells, distributes, or possesses with intent to sell or distribute any substance represented as any of those mentioned above, or solicits someone else to purchase or receive such substances, is guilty of a very serious breach of conduct, which shall be referred to the proper law enforcement agency and could result in criminal penalties. In all such cases, the student shall be dismissed.



Tobacco, Vaping, and Nicotine Products

The possession or use of tobacco products, lighters, matches, nicotine delivery devices, e-cigarettes, or vapor products is strictly prohibited. Violations will result in an office referral, notification of law enforcement, and disciplinary action, including detention, suspension, or dismissal.

Search Procedures & Reasonable Suspicion

In the interest of safety, students suspected of violating the Drug or Alcohol policies are subject to search. If probable cause exists, the school is not required to contact parents/guardians prior to conducting a student search. A search may be conducted based on reasonable suspicion, which may include:

- Observable behavior or signs of impairment
- Odor of drugs, alcohol, or vape
- Visible paraphernalia
- Reports from credible sources

Searches may include:

- Pockets and outer clothing
- Backpacks, purses, or other belongings
- Personal vehicles parked on school property

If a student refuses a search:

- Parent/guardian and the School Resource Deputy will be contacted
- If the parent/guardian agrees to the search, the school will conduct the search regardless of student refusal.



- If the parent and student refuse the search, the student will receive a disciplinary referral and 3-day OSS

Dangerous Weapons/Items

Any student who brings a dangerous weapon (firearms/knives) or any item that would endanger the health, safety, and well-being of students or staff on school property will immediately serve a long-term suspension from school followed by dismissal.

Note: The possession of a concealed weapon is a felony crime and requires that the incident be reported to law enforcement. Any student who is complicit in concealing the presence of a weapon will also be suspended, followed by dismissal. Neither pocket knives, lighters, firecrackers, nor other types of dangerous objects are permitted at school or on school buses. If searches yield illegal or contraband materials, such findings shall be turned over to the proper legal authorities for further investigation. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken for those found in possession.



Parental Notification & Due Process

If the student is found in possession of drugs, alcohol, vapes, weapons, or any other item(s) that present a safety concern or is illegal, parents/guardians will be informed of the situation and consequences. If applicable, parents/guardians will receive:

- A scheduled conference with the Dean and Principal
- A written explanation of the offense, options, and appeal procedures
- A chance to opt into the Phoenix Program (if eligible)

Parents may submit a written appeal of a dismissal to the Director of Schools, Michele Spurgeon (michelespurgeon@mckeelschools.com) within 3 school days of notification.

Academic Honesty: McKeel Academy is committed to maintaining high academic standards that require a high level of academic integrity from all students. **Cheating** is defined as any work that a student submits that he or she did not complete honestly and fully. **Plagiarizing** is presenting or accessing work that is not your own, with or



without their consent. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Using AI **without teacher approval**
- Using the internet to find answers without teacher permission
- Copying other students' work
- Using reference materials (cheat sheets, books, note cards, etc.) during quizzes or tests, without teacher permission
- Sharing answers: the person giving the answers is considered to be cheating as well as the person receiving answers
- Sharing information meant as an individual assignment to a group
- Exchanging passwords and answers for homework, tests, quizzes, and/or projects.
- Taking credit for work without citing references
- Logging into other students' Canvas accounts with or without their knowledge and submitting their work (consequences for this behavior will result in an out-of-school suspension).

***Students engaging in these behaviors will be ineligible to participate in honor societies or academic-related clubs.**

Formative Assignments and Assessments: Sharing class work or formative assessment answers with other students without teacher approval is considered academic dishonesty.

First Offense:

- Consequences: The student will receive a zero on the assignment and will serve detention with the teacher.
- Next Steps: It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the teacher to complete an alternative assignment.

Second Offense:

- Consequences: The student will receive a zero on the assignment, be referred to an administrator, and have work detail assigned.
- Next Steps: The student will not have the opportunity to make up the assignment.

Third Offense:

- Consequences: This will be treated as chronic academic dishonesty.



- Outcome: The student will receive a zero for the assignment, no alternative will be offered, they will be referred to an administrator, and the student will face out-of-school suspension and may be dismissed from MAT.

Summative Projects, Assignments, and Assessments: Sharing information or answers on summative assessments, summative assignments, or summative activities/projects, as well as sharing school account credentials (e.g., for Canvas, Notability, Google Drive), with other students constitutes academic dishonesty.

First Offense:

- Consequences: The student will be referred to an administrator and assigned work detail.
- Next Steps: It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the teacher to determine if an alternative assignment will be accepted/given.

Subsequent Offenses:

- Consequences: The student will be referred to an administrator, face out-of-school suspension, and may be dismissed from MAT.
- Next Steps: The student will not have the opportunity to make up the assignment.

Electronic Device Policy

Maintaining a safe, distraction-free learning environment is a top priority at McKeel Academy of Technology. The proper use of all electronic devices, including cell phones, smartwatches, headphones/earbuds/airpods, and tablets, is essential for ensuring academic focus and student safety.

Prohibited Uses

The following uses of devices are strictly prohibited:

- Displaying or accessing **inappropriate, discriminatory, or illegal content**
- **Social media misuse**, including:
 - Harassment
 - Threats



- Intimidation of students or staff
 - Using devices in **locker rooms or restrooms**, including for texting, calling, or photography
 - Taking videos or photos of students or staff without consent
-

Device Responsibility

Students are solely responsible for:

- The safety and security of their own devices
- Keeping passwords private and secure
- Managing and monitoring their online activity

*The school is ***not responsible*** for lost, damaged, or stolen electronic devices. Lost items may be turned in to the front office, but retrieval is not guaranteed.

To comply with HB 1105 and Florida Statutes, McKeel Academy of Technology has updated its Electronic Device Policy:

High School Students (Grades 9–12)

- Upon entering the classroom, each class period, students must **place their phones in the designated classroom cellphone holder.**
- Phones must remain there until the teacher gives permission to use them or the class period ends.
- Phones must not be used in the hallways or restrooms during instructional time.
- **Phones must not be used during scheduled lunch time.**

Approved use for high school students:

- Between classes
- During class only with explicit teacher permission

***Devices must not be visible or in use during any other time.**



Middle School Students (Grades 7–8)

- **Cellphones or other wireless communication devices are not permitted for use from the first bell (8:40 a.m.) until dismissal.**
- During this time, **cell phones must be powered off and stored securely in the student's backpack.** Phones may not be accessed during transitions, lunch, or restroom breaks.
- If contact with your student is needed, please contact the front office. Students are also allowed to use the office phone if a need arises.

Consequences For Unauthorized Cell Phone Use

Any student found using a cellphone or wireless device in violation of these guidelines will face the following consequences:

- **First Offense:** Detention and phone returned at end of day
- **Second Offense:** Work Detail and phone held in the front office; parent/guardian must pick it up
- **Subsequent Offenses:** Progressive disciplinary action will be taken, to include out-of-school suspension, and a cell phone will no longer be allowed at school.

Incomplete forms (student/parent contract), textbooks, library, uniform fees, E-Hallpass, 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, including but not limited to sports, clubs, field trips, prom, homecoming, and graduation. Students with obligations will not be able to purchase tickets for school events.

Community Service: Community Service is a valuable asset for students in regard to college acceptance, Bright Futures Scholarships, and some school clubs and service organizations. Community service hours must be documented every quarter. Forms are located on the website under Student Information. Students can upload their community service log by logging into McKeel Systems. Community service hours must be submitted by the deadline specified for each quarter and must reflect only the hours that were earned within the designated quarter. Late submissions of Community Service forms will not be approved. Hours earned over the summer must be submitted by the 1st quarter deadline.



Community Service Guidelines and directions on how to review your community service hours report can be found at: [Community Service Hours](#)

In addition, NO community service hours can take place during the school day.

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 Mrs. Noel Green, Assistant Principal. This must be submitted annually.

House Bill 529—Moments of Silence in Florida’s Public Schools. Requires at least one minute of silence in 1st period classrooms daily.

Student Arrival & Movement Policy

Arrival Time

Students may not arrive on campus before 8:15 a.m. unless they have a pass from a school staff member. Supervision is not available before this time, and early arrivals may be subject to disciplinary action.

📍 Designated Morning Locations (Beginning at 8:15 a.m.)

Upon arrival, students must report directly to their designated grade-level area:

- 7th Grade: Front of designated areas (Buildings 4 and 12)
- 8th Grade: Hallways outside the Media Center (Buildings 5 and 6)
- 9th & 10th Grade: High school covered pavilion
- 11th & 12th Grade: Basketball court near the gym

The first bell rings at 8:36 a.m. Arrival to class after 8:40 a.m. is considered tardy/late.

Breakfast

Students who need breakfast should go directly to the cafeteria upon arrival. After eating, they must report to their designated area.



E-Hallpasses & Movement During School Hours

- Students must have an E-Hallpass from a teacher or staff member to be out of class during instructional time.
- Returning to class without an E-Hallpass will result in an infraction and may lead to further disciplinary action.
- Students found wandering, lingering in hallways, or entering unauthorized areas without an E-Hallpass will receive disciplinary action.

Tardiness & Infractions

- Students who return to class late **from lunch** will receive an infraction.
- Repeated infractions for tardiness or unauthorized movement may result in detentions or loss of parking privileges (see Attendance & Parking Policies for details).

Student Dismissal/Pick-up:

- **Dismissal Time:**
 - Bus riders will be dismissed at 2:26 p.m. All other students will be dismissed at 2:32 p.m.
- **Car Pick-up Location:**
 - Student car pick-up must occur at the two designated car lines in front of the school.
 - Pick-ups are not allowed in parking lots or across the street.
- **Off-Campus Expectation:**
 - All students must leave campus by 2:45 p.m. unless directly supervised by an adult such as a coach, club sponsor, or tutoring teacher.
 - There is NO after-school childcare. Students found roaming campus will receive a disciplinary referral.

Bus Transportation: The bus drivers have complete authority over all students and the power to enforce all rules and regulations. Bus drivers have the same authority in the bus as teachers have in the classroom. Their directives are to be followed at all times to transport students safely, orderly, and reliably. Students are to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with bus safety. Students must adhere to seating arrangements



established by the driver and must remain seated while the bus is in motion. Throwing items out of a bus window is a serious safety violation and will result in loss of bus privileges.

McKeel buses have installed video cameras, with audio, to monitor student behavior. If a student misbehaves on a bus and his/her actions are recorded, if necessary, the video will be reviewed by school administration. Students must follow all bus expectations; failure to comply will result in a bus referral and may result in loss of bus privileges. In order to ride a McKeel school bus, transportation information must be completed in the McKeel Online Office. Please contact the McKeel Transportation Department at bushelpdesk@mckeelschools.com for any additional information.

Parking on Campus:

- Parking decals are \$30/year and must be obtained prior to parking on campus.
- If students purchase a parking decal anytime *after* the start of semester 2, the price is \$15.
- The campus speed limit is 5 mph. Students must drive cautiously and courteously.
- Students must display parking decals on the driver's side front windshield.
- Students must park in the designated parking lot for their grade level.

Parking Etiquette:

- Upon arrival, students must park straight in designated spots and avoid blocking others.
- Students are not permitted to linger in their cars; they must exit and proceed to designated areas or the cafeteria.
- Returning to cars during the school day requires permission from the office.
- After dismissal, students not participating in after-school activities should promptly leave campus.
- Failure to comply with parking expectations may result in loss of driving privileges.

Vehicle Search Policy:

- The school administration may search vehicles on campus if there is reasonable suspicion of prohibited items such as alcohol, drugs, weapons, or tobacco products.
- Confiscated illegal items will result in disciplinary action and may involve law enforcement.



Tardy/Checkout/Attendance & Parking Privileges

To keep parking privileges, student drivers must arrive on time and attend school consistently. Excessive unexcused tardies, unexcused checkouts, and unexcused absences will result in temporary loss of parking privileges.

What counts as excessive tardiness or checkouts?

- 15+ unexcused tardies or checkouts within a semester to any class period.

What happens?

- Parking privilege will be revoked
- Student must return school parking decal
- Student will submit a **Parking Reinstatement Request Form** to have their parking privileges reinstated with the following guidelines:
 - A student must go 15 consecutive school days without an unexcused tardy or checkout
 - Submit request to administration for review/approval

What counts as excessive absences?

- 8+ unexcused absences within a semester in any class

What happens?

- Student is placed on an Attendance Contract (see Attendance Policies for additional information)

Important:

- Excused tardies, checkouts, and/or absences must be documented with uploaded notes in Systems.
- Repeated violations will result in **permanent loss** of parking privileges.

Attendance Policies:

State law requires all children between the ages of 6 and 18 to attend school until the mandated requirements have been met. There is a direct relationship between attendance and learning. Missed classroom teaching and learning activities can never truly be replaced. Attitudes regarding the value of education and the importance of study are shaped by parental priorities regarding school attendance. School attendance policies are



designed to encourage a high value on education. It is imperative that parents support the importance of school attendance by not asking for or supporting unnecessary absences. Students may only earn credit for the purposes of requirements for high school graduation or middle school promotion if they are in attendance for a minimum of 135 hours of bona fide instruction.

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. With suspension of a driver’s license, parking privileges on campus will be revoked.

Absences:

- Parents receive automated messages for student absences.
- Each absence is automatically considered unexcused.
- Excessive unexcused absences may lead to dismissal from MAT.
- Student athletes must be present for a minimum of half the school day on game days to participate in sports.

Excused Absences - Documentation Submission:

- For late arrivals or absences to be evaluated to determine if they are excused, required documentation must be uploaded to McKeel Systems.
- Navigate to 'Attendance' and select 'Upload Note' to submit documentation.
- Parents and students must submit absence documentation through McKeel Systems within 7 school days from the absence.
- Submission of falsified documentation will result in out-of-school suspension.

Approved Excused Absences:

- Criteria for determining excused absences shall be in compliance with Florida Statutes.
- Some valid/approved excuses include but are not limited to medical appointments, mental health, dental appointments, religious holidays, bereavement, legal proceedings, etc.
- Documentation must be submitted for any of these to be considered (see above for



directions).

Attendance Warning/Contract: Students who miss **5** unexcused days in a semester of school in **any** class period are given an attendance warning. If a student reaches **8** unexcused absences in **any** class period during a semester, he/she will then be placed on an attendance contract. Parents and the student are required to attend a meeting with the attendance coordinator to discuss attendance requirements. Under this contract:

- Students are at risk of not earning credit for the semester, regardless of their current grades.
- Students are ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities, which include, but are not limited to pep rallies, prom, homecoming, and senior privileges.
- Student drivers will have campus parking privileges revoked (see Tardy/Attendance & Parking Privileges for details).
- Students are at risk of dismissal from McKeel Academy.

Once a student is placed on an attendance contract, it will remain in effect for **45 school days** providing the student does not accumulate any further unexcused absences during that period.

College Visits for Juniors and Seniors:

- Juniors and seniors are allowed two additional excused absences per year for visiting prospective colleges, fire academies, police academies, or military offices.
- These visits must be planned in advance and approved by both a School Counselor and an Administrator.
- Official confirmation with the corresponding date from the prospective college, fire academy, police academy, or military office must be uploaded to McKeel Systems within 7 days of the visit for approval.

Make-up work: 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. Please see the grading policy for additional clarification.

Tardies and Early Checkouts: This policy is per semester.

- Students missing more than 50% of any class due to tardiness or early checkout will be marked as absent for that class.



- Upon arriving late, students must report to the office for check-in and receive an E-Hall Pass to class.
- Accumulating 8 unexcused tardies, 8 early checkouts, or a combination of the two results in an Excessive Tardy/Checkout Warning.
- Reaching 12 unexcused tardies, 12 early checkouts, or a combination of the two will result in being issued a detention. Tardy detentions will be served on Tuesdays. Failure to attend scheduled detention will result in a work detail.
- Unexcused tardies or unexcused checkouts at 15+ will follow the same policies as the excessive absence policy. The Excessive Tardy/Checkout contract will last for 45 school days, provided the student does not accumulate further unexcused tardies/early checkouts.

Check-Out Procedures

To maintain a safe and orderly environment, McKeel Academy of Technology follows the procedures below for student check-outs:

Check-Out Time

- **No check-outs are allowed after 2:00 p.m.**
 - This is to minimize disruptions near dismissal and ensure student safety.

Authorized Check-Outs

- Only **parents, guardians, or adults listed as emergency contacts** may check out a student.
- A **valid photo ID** must be shown at the time of check-out.
- If a parent/guardian is unable to come to campus:
 - An **email request may be approved by school staff.**
 - The email must include:
 - A copy of the parent/guardian's **driver's license**
 - The **student's legal name**



- The **date and time** of requested check-out
- Send requests to: **MATCheckout@mckeelschools.com**

Driving Restrictions

- If school administration determines that a student is **unfit to drive**, a parent or emergency contact **must pick the student up** and arrange for alternative transportation.

Lunch Check-Outs

- **Students may not check out during lunch.**
- Students are **not permitted to leave campus for lunch and return.**
- Violations of this rule will result in disciplinary consequences.

Consequences for Unauthorized Check-Outs

1. **First Offense:** Parent and student will receive a **written reminder** via email.
2. **Second Offense:** **Parent-student conference** required; student will serve **detention**.
3. **Subsequent Offenses:** Subject to **progressive discipline** as determined by administration.

Parking Decal Instructions:

- Instructions for obtaining parking decals can be found at [Student Resources | McKeel Academy of Technology](#)
- **E-Hall Pass Use:** E-Hall Pass is required for ALL students and **must** be purchased for \$10 through McKeel Online Office within the first week of school. Failure to purchase an E-Hall Pass will result in an obligation being placed on the student record. This tool will be used for hall passes, late check-ins, early checkouts, etc. Anyone found outside of class without an E-Hall Pass is considered skipping, and students with an E-Hallpass who are found out of area 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 lunchtime.

Lunch: Students are **NOT** permitted to check out during their lunch period. This will be monitored, and a parent conference will be required for those in violation. **Returning to class late from lunch** will result in an **infraction** and may lead to further disciplinary action.

Students are expected to maintain a positive balance in their cafeteria account. Students with charges exceeding \$30.00 will be provided with an alternate meal. 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. For details about the menu or how to apply for free/reduced-priced meals, please visit: <https://www.mckeelschools.com/departments/food-service>

Meal Prices:

\$1.50 Breakfast

\$3.25 Lunch

Reduced Prices:

\$.30 Breakfast

\$.40 Lunch

Eating and Drinking:

- **Outside Food:**
 - Students are not allowed to bring outside vendor food to school to maintain campus cleanliness and minimize pests.
- **Drinks:**
 - Students may bring drinks in reusable containers with twist-on or snap-on caps/tops.
 - Glass and disposable containers that cannot be resealed are not permitted.
 - Students should adhere to classroom guidelines for consuming beverages.
- **Sales of Food and Drink:**
 - Students are prohibited from selling food or drink items to other students without prior approval from administration.
- **Consequences:**



- Violations of these rules will result in an infraction or referral as deemed appropriate by school officials.

Student Identification Badges: Student identification badges will be provided to all students to ensure the safety and security of students and staff. Students are expected to have their ID card with them at all times. This ID can also be used when purchasing items in the cafeteria. Lost ID cards can be repurchased through the McKeel Online Office for \$5.

Uniform Policy: While on campus, students attending McKeel Academy of Technology are required to dress appropriately. 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: 6914-28 S. Fla. Ave., IMPERIAL CHRISTINA PLAZA, Lakeland, FL 33813. Phone: 863-940-9913. Anyone needing financial assistance in obtaining uniforms should contact their School Counselor or other school personnel.

Parents, we need you to partner with us to ensure that your student abides by the dress code. Criticism and negative communication regarding these rules create an unwillingness to comply in students. We want to ensure that the dress code does not become a major issue at MAT. The dress code is NOT optional. We are here to provide an exceptional educational experience for all students. Students are expected to comply with the dress code, and parents are expected to monitor compliance before their children leave home.

General Uniform Guidelines

- **Uniform Must Be Worn Daily:** McKeel uniform must be worn at all times.
- **Shirts:** Must be tucked in, fit properly, and remain unaltered. Rolling or altering shirts is not allowed.
 - Colors: Navy blue, hunter green, or white. Only Seniors are allowed to wear red
 - Must be McKeel “M” logo polo shirt
 - Must be worn under hoodies, sweatshirts, or jackets
- **Bottoms (Pants, Shorts, Skorts):**
 - Colors: Navy blue, khaki, or McKeel Academy plaid
 - Must be worn at the waist
 - Must not be rolled at the waist or hemline
 - Must be below the fingertips when standing with shoulders relaxed.
 - Undergarments must not be visible (example: long sliders or underwear)
 - Skirts are not allowed



- **Belts:** Must be worn properly through belt loops, with buckle fastened and visible
 - **Logos:** Only McKeel logos are allowed on clothing
 - **Clothing Condition:** No tears, rips, frays, or holes
 - **Shoes:**
 - Must have closed toes and heels
 - No Crocs, sandals, slides, slippers, or open-heel/toe shoes
 - **Hair:**
 - Must be a naturally occurring color
 - Cannot fall below the eyebrows
 - Extreme or distracting styles (mohawks, carvings, etc.) are not permitted
 - **Body Art & Jewelry:**
 - Tattoos must be covered
 - One small nose stud is permitted; other facial piercings are not allowed
 - Gauges, spacers, or distracting accessories are not allowed
-

Outerwear

- Jackets, hoodies, and sweaters must be **solid navy, black, or gray**, or feature an official McKeel logo
 - Must not extend past the length of uniform bottoms
 - Logos must be **no larger than a business card**
 - Hoods may not be worn while on campus
 - **A McKeel uniform shirt must be worn underneath all outerwear**
 - No denim jackets, trench coats, or blankets allowed
-

Undershirts and Leggings

- Must be solid navy, black, gray or white
 - Must not be see-through or display logos/designs
 - Leggings can only be worn under uniform bottoms
-

Uncorrectable Violations



Includes:

- Torn/ripped clothing/frayed
- Missing belts
- Incorrect uniforms or lengths
- Hair color/style violations
- Inappropriate shoes

Procedure for violation:

1. **Student sent to office**
 2. **Correction Options:**
 - Call home for correct clothing
 - Purchase used item for \$10 (shirt, pants, shorts, skorts, or belt)
 - If school provides the item, the cost is added to student obligation
 - Infraction is entered by issuing teacher
 3. **Return to Class:** After dress code is corrected
-

Dress Code Additions

- **P.E. Uniforms:**
 - Must be purchased from McKeel
 - Worn only during P.E. classes (not under school uniform)
 - P.E. grade requirement
 - Alteration not allowed
- **Cold Weather Days:**
 - Notified by school announcement, email, school website, or Facebook
 - **Blue jeans** allowed if specified (no holes, frays, rips)
 - Approved hoodie/jacket
 - Students without a “heavy” jacket or coat can layer appropriate “optional apparel” to stay warm. If the student opts to wear a hoodie, it **MUST** be solid navy blue, black, or gray and/or have an official “McKeel” logo. No other hoodies are allowed. **Denim jean jackets, trench coats, or blankets are not allowed.**
- **Toys/Accessories:**
 - Not allowed (Includes stuffed animals, LEGOs, sports balls, etc.)
 - Distracting accessories (grills, extreme earrings, etc.) are not allowed
 - Bandanas are only allowed to be worn as a headband and not as a head covering



- Caps, hats, sunglasses, sweatbands, hair rollers, durags, and similar items are not allowed during school hours

Additional Prohibited Items

- Gang-related, discriminatory, or promotional clothing
 - Clothing promoting tobacco, alcohol, drugs, violence, religion, disability, national origin, political affiliation, sex, relationship status, race
 - Unapproved shirts for Homecoming (must be pre-approved by administration)
-

Special Groups & Events

- **Seniors:**
 - Must wear McKeel M polo Mon-Thu; blue jeans allowed Mon-Fri
 - **Friday Dress:**
 - May wear McKeel spirit/team/club shirts with uniform bottoms
 - Jeans are allowed for \$35/year (Grades 7-11), paid in August; must be free of rips, frays, holes, decorations, jegging material
 - **Professional Dress Days (Administrator-approved days):**
 - Shirts tucked in, belts worn, if appropriate
 - Males: dress pants, collared shirt tucked in, tie
 - Females: dress slacks/skirts/dresses (no shorter than 3" above knee)
 - **Game Day Attire:**
 - Sports Teams: game jersey with uniform bottoms (**game days only**)
 - Cheer/Dazzlers: designated game day shirt with uniform bottoms (**performance days only**)
-

Event & Field Trip Guidelines

- All school events require adherence to the McKeel Student Handbook and Polk County Code of Conduct
- Inappropriate behavior may result in being sent home at parents' expense
- Families are responsible for any damages caused by student misconduct
- Students on academic, behavior, tardy, or attendance contracts may not participate. If students are placed on contracts after payment has been made, they will not be refunded.
- Students that receive a major referral may not participate and will not be refunded.



McKeel Academy Grading Policy

Middle School Grading Policy

Homework

Homework, or “at home practice,” will NOT be part of a grade. Anything assigned for students to complete at home should be practice that is directly related to instruction that is occurring in class.

Due Dates/Lock Dates

Assignments will be given a specific due date. For **Middle School** (7th and 8th grade courses), students are expected to submit the assignment by the due date. If there is an extenuating circumstance preventing a student from meeting the due date, that extenuating circumstance must be communicated to the teacher within 24 hours. Pending teacher approval, students may have a grace period of 2 days to submit any assignment not turned in on the due date. This will be the lock date for the assignment. Assignments will not be accepted past the lock date. Students with accommodations will receive their additional time.

Formative Assessments

Formative assessments are designed to measure student learning for a priority standard prior to the summative, and students will be held accountable for completing them. In order to be successful, students should complete all formative assessments by the due date assigned by the teacher.

If a student does not complete the formative assessment by the assigned due date, the teacher will:

- Enter a Z or a 0 (zero) for any assignment not completed. A “Z” would be entered for any student that is allowed to submit the assignment past the due date.
- An automated email will go out each evening for any student with a Z for an assignment. If students receive multiple Z’s in different courses in a single day, parents will receive a single email notification.



- All Z's will automatically turn to a zero in the gradebook one week after the lock date. At that point, the assignment cannot be submitted. Exceptions will only be made under extreme circumstances.
- If a student is allowed to submit the assignment late, no grade penalties will be given.

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments will align with curriculum outcomes and provide information regarding student mastery. If a student does not complete the summative by the assigned date, the teacher will:

- Enter a Z for any assignment not completed.
- An automated email will go out for any student with a Z for a summative assessment.
- The student is expected to schedule the completion of the summative immediately after receiving email notification.
- All Z's will automatically turn to a zero in the gradebook one week after the lock date. Exceptions will only be made under extreme circumstances.
- If a student is allowed to submit the assignment late, no grade penalties will be given.
- **Students serving OSS will be required to take missed summatives immediately upon their return to campus.**

Student Reassessment

There are times when a student needs additional learning/time to master content. Instructional staff will allow for student reassessment to be consistent with the following policy: Students who earn failing grades of **D's** or **F's** on summative assessments will be provided **one** additional opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Any other grade earned by a student must receive approval from the individual teacher to be allowed to reassess.



Students will:

- Have all practice/formative assessments completed prior to the date of the summative assessment to have an opportunity to reassess.
- Communicate with the teacher to request a reassessment.

Cheating/Plagiarism (see section on Academic Honesty)

Cheating/Plagiarism on any type of assessment is considered a violation of our Academic Honesty Policy. Any student that is found in violation of our Academic Honesty Policy will be issued disciplinary consequences for the incident. The teacher or administration will determine the consequence the student will receive for the behavior. The teacher will allow the student the opportunity to demonstrate their level of understanding of the content covered on the assessment. If the student is eligible for reassessment, this would be considered the student's reassessment opportunity. The final grade of the assessment should be a direct reflection of the student's level of understanding of the content, not a reflection of their behavior. Students who have subsequent incidents of plagiarism or cheating will receive a zero for the assessment.

High School Grading Policy

Homework

Homework, or "at home practice," will NOT be part of a grade. Anything assigned for students to complete at home should be practice that is directly related to instruction that is occurring in class.

Due Dates

Assignments will be given a specific due date. For **High School** (9th-12th grade courses), students will be required to turn all assignments in on the due date unless an exception is given. Assignments will not be accepted past the due date. Students with accommodations will receive their additional time.



Formative Assessments

Formative assessments are designed to measure student learning for a priority standard prior to the summative, and students will be held accountable for completing them. In order to be successful, students should complete all formative assessments by the due date assigned by the teacher.

If a student does not complete the formative assessment by the assigned due date, the teacher will:

- Enter a Z or a 0 (zero) for any assignment not completed. A “Z” would be entered for any student that is allowed to submit the assignment past the due date.
- An automated email will go out each evening for any student with a “Z” for an assignment. If students receive multiple Zs in different courses in a single day, parents will receive a single email notification.
- All Zs will automatically turn to a zero in the gradebook one week after the due date. At that point, the assignment cannot be submitted. Exceptions will only be made under extreme circumstances.
- If a student is allowed to submit the assignment late, no grade penalties will be given.

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments will align with curriculum outcomes and provide information regarding student mastery. If a student does not complete the summative by the assigned date, the teacher will:

- Enter a Z for any assignment not completed.
- An automated email will go out for any student with a Z for a summative assessment.
- The student is expected to schedule the completion of the summative immediately after receiving email notification.
- All Z’s will automatically turn to a zero in the gradebook one week after the due date. Exceptions will only be made under extreme circumstances.
- If a student is allowed to submit the assignment late, no grade penalties will be given.
- **Students serving OSS will be required to take missed summatives immediately upon their return to campus.**



Student Reassessment

There are times when a student needs additional learning/time to master content. Instructional staff will allow for student reassessment to be consistent with the following policy: Students who earn failing grades of **D's** or **F's** on summative assessments will be provided **one** additional opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Any other score earned by a student must receive approval from the individual teacher to be allowed to reassess.

Students will:

- Have all practice/formative assessments completed prior to the date of the summative assessment to have an opportunity to reassess.
- Communicate with the teacher to request a reassessment.

AP Classes and Reassessments

Teachers of AP classes are not required to allow reassessments. Their grading policy will be clearly stated in their syllabus and stay consistent throughout the year.

Cheating/Plagiarism (see section on Academic Honesty):

Cheating/Plagiarism on any type of assessment is considered a violation of our Academic Honesty Policy. Any student that is found in violation of our Academic Honesty Policy will be issued disciplinary consequences for the incident. A teacher or administrator will determine the consequence the student will receive for the behavior. The teacher will allow the student the opportunity to demonstrate their level of understanding of the content covered on the assessment. If the student is eligible for reassessment, this would be considered the student's reassessment opportunity. The final grade of the assessment should be a direct reflection of the student's level of understanding of the content, not a reflection of their behavior. Students who have subsequent incidents of plagiarism or cheating will receive a zero for the assessment.



Parent(Guardian)-Student Contract and Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Parent(s)/Guardians:

By choosing to enroll a child at The Schools of McKeel Academy, parents provide their child with an exciting educational opportunity. Registration of a student indicates that parents or guardians have accepted the responsibility to provide the proper support, encouragement, guidance, and home environment to foster the best possible learning situation. The Schools of McKeel Academy expect parents and students to comply with the requirements of the school. Please read the following expectations carefully.

1. I understand that as a parent, I must be supportive of my child and his/her school.
 - I understand that my child is to adhere to the uniform dress code. All uniform clothing must be purchased through Risse Brothers. On cold weather days, students **must** wear proper uniform bottoms purchased through the uniform supplier. Students will **not** be able to wear jeans on cold weather days unless communicated otherwise by the school.
 - I understand my child is to adhere to the discipline policies of the school.
 - I understand that I (or designee) am **required** to attend mandatory meetings, conferences, trainings, or other school-sponsored activities as deemed necessary by the school.
2. I understand that my child is expected to attend school every day, to arrive promptly, and to remain throughout the scheduled hours.
 - Excessive tardiness and/or absences will be tracked and communicated to parents and to the Department of Education as required by law.
 - I understand that high school academic credit **may not be given** to any student with excessive absences (MAT only).
 - I also agree to strive to schedule medical/dental/etc. appointments outside of school hours.
3. I understand that it is my responsibility to notify the school if my child is absent or is to be released in the custody of another adult in order to leave the school grounds.
 - Any adult requesting to check out a student must have their name on the emergency card and provide proper ID at the time of checkout.
 - I agree to pick up or have my child picked up on time from all school activities.
4. Failure to follow school rules will result in my child serving out-of-school suspension or possible dismissal from The Schools of McKeel Academy.
 - Any student who commits a major violation of the Code of Conduct will be immediately dismissed from school.
 - I understand that it is my responsibility to provide transportation if my child is assigned before or after school detentions or work detail.
5. I understand that it is my responsibility (or my designee's) to review all homework and communications (this includes interims and report cards), as requested, and as needed meet with his/her teacher or team of teachers.
 - The school website, student Canvas accounts, and student school emails should be reviewed daily.
6. I understand that my child is participating in a rigorous academic program that may include academic remediation or after-school remediation in order to maintain continuous academic progress and desirable work habits.
7. I understand that it is my responsibility to provide the school with the appropriate documents when my phone number, address, and/or other important changes on my child's emergency card occur.
8. I understand that my child **must** participate in our career shadowing (middle and high school), Rock Around the Clock, and a Senior Internship. Failure to do so will result in loss of privileges as deemed appropriate by administration.
9. I understand that all my child's schoolwork must be their own. Students who receive a referral for academic dishonesty/cheating will be ineligible for membership in any honor society.



Students:

I understand that attending The Schools of McKeel Academy is a choice and that in making this choice I agree to abide by the policies and procedures of The Schools of McKeel Academy. I also understand The Schools of McKeel Academy offers a rigorous and academically challenging program that may require extra effort in class and additional homework time.

Please read the following expectations carefully:

1. I will put forth my best effort academically. I will listen and participate in class, ask questions when appropriate, and turn in high-quality assignments on time.
2. I will purchase and use the eHallpass as outlined by schoolwide expectations.
3. I will read and follow The Schools of McKeel Academy uniform policy and dress code rules. All my uniform items must be from Risse Brothers.
4. I will read and follow the discipline policies of The Schools of McKeel Academy.
5. I will be on time to school and be in school every day. If I am absent, I or my parents will upload a medical, dental, or any other valid excuse note into McKeel Systems.
6. I understand that I am responsible for all missing assignments when I am absent, and I will schedule a time to meet with my teachers to collect and/or do any summative work missed.
7. I will be on time, in the class that I am assigned to, and prepared for class to begin.
8. I will abide by the rules governing the use of cellphones and other electronic devices at all times.
9. I will display a positive attitude towards the school, staff, and my peers. I will strive to represent my school in a positive manner; this includes at the bus stop, on the bus, on field trips, at school-sponsored events, while career shadowing, etc.
10. I will participate in our career shadowing days, Rock Around the Clock, and the Senior Internship Program.
11. I understand that all schoolwork must be my own, and if I receive a referral for academic dishonesty/cheating, I am ineligible for membership in any honor society.
12. I understand that failure to meet behavior expectations may result in my dismissal from McKeel Academy of Technology.

Please be familiar with the McKeel Academy of Technology Student Handbook. We also abide by the Polk County Code of Conduct. You may view the Student Handbook on our website at <https://www.mckeelacademy.com>. You can view the Polk County Code of Conduct at <https://www.polkschoolsfl.com/quicklinks/codeofconduct>. You may also request that the school provide a physical copy of the Student Handbook.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have received the information about accessing the Student Handbook and Polk County Code of Conduct and agree to abide by the requirements therein.

I agree to all of the above expectations and understand that violation of this contract may result in consequences set forth by The Schools of McKeel Academy.

Student Signature _____

Date _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

Do not turn in a paper copy to the office

Please complete and submit this Acknowledgement Form electronically via McKeel Systems.