

Family Handbook

**Milwaukee Environmental Sciences
Academy, ULC Charter School
Urban Learning Collaborative**

www.mesa-school.org

My Child's Teacher Information

Name _____

Room # _____

Greetings Families!

Thank you for selecting the Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy (MESA), a Urban Learning Collaborative (ULC) Charter School for your child. In 2011 the (TECH) now known as (ULC) Board of Directors, elected to expand education programming in Milwaukee with a charter school. Building upon the ULC foundation of the teacher certification programs and professional development services for educators, in 2013, MESA emerged!

On behalf of the ULC Board of Directors and myself as the Executive Director of ULC, I welcome you under the wings, where our scholars soar towards success! I welcome you to catch the vision, where educators and aspiring educators come to observe our unique way of transforming learning through effective teaching. I invite you on a journey where individuals from around the state and nation come to be inspired.

In Partnership,

Laci Coppins Robbins, Ed.D., Executive Director Urban Learning Collaborative.

URBAN LEARNING COLLABORATIVE
(ULC) (formerly Milwaukee Teacher Education Center)
www.urban-learning.org

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Through thoughtful design, our scholars will engage in rigorous and authentic experiences that ask them to be researchers, communicators, critical thinkers, and compassionate members of their community. Learning of this caliber can only occur with an equal emphasis on developing and nurturing a strong school culture. We strongly believe that parents must make informed choices about their children's education. We are delighted and honored that you have chosen MESA as the best learning environment and instructional program for your child. We know that this is a decision you have made with great care and reflection about your child's educational strengths and needs.

MESA believes that children learn best when schools and families work in partnership with each other. An important element of that partnership is ongoing communication. The Family Handbook will inform you of MESA's practices, policies, and procedures that contribute to the smooth operation of our school and quality relationships with you, our MESA family.

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact our school office.

Once again, thank you for making the decision to share your child with us. We are committed to achieving the highest academic and character standards with our scholars, and we look forward to working with you to ensure your child/ren's success.

Sincerely,

Janet Colvin

Principal

Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy, a ULC Charter School

Administrative Team

Principal

Janet Colvin

Assistant Principal

Khiana Cobb

Dean of Family Engagement

Latrice Hughes

Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy Mission Statement

As an EL Education School (formerly known as Expeditionary Learning), Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy, a ULC Charter School, is dedicated to creating a safe, nurturing, and rigorous learning environment that supports the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth of all its scholars. Emphasis is placed on engaging scholars in active learning, real-world problem solving, and decision making, with a focus on environmental stewardship and community involvement.

Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy Vision Statement

Milwaukee Environmental Science Academy a ULC Charter School, scholars are propelled to soar academically while demonstrating habits of scholarship that build strong character as they navigate toward college and career readiness with the support of professional lifelong learners.

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School Overview

Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy (MESA) is an Urban Learning Collaborative Center (ULC) Charter School. MESA is a non-instrumentality public charter school, authorized by Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). Any child who lives in the city of Milwaukee is eligible to attend at no cost.

MESA provides an educational program that balances challenging and engaging projects (learning expeditions) with high expectations for scholar achievement based on Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Exemplary work and performance as well as strong habits of scholarship are the primary goals at MESA.

We believe that all children can and want to learn. Through discovery, inquiry, and critical thinking we prepare our scholars to become leaders of their own learning. We set high expectations for achievement and provide the necessary support to enable every scholar to meet or exceed these expectations.

School Calendar

The school day at MESA begins at 7:25 am and ends at 2:25 pm with four scheduled intercessions in fall, winter, spring, and summer. Refer to our annual school calendar, which is updated yearly.

Small Class Size

There are two sections of each grade level (K4-8th grade) with an enrollment goal of twenty-five scholars per classroom. This staffing model helps us to meet each scholar's individualized needs. All classroom teachers have at minimum a Bachelor's degree and are certified by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in the state of Wisconsin.

What is EL Education?

The EL Education Model developed in collaboration between Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education is based on the understanding that high-quality learning is active, challenging, meaningful, public, and collaborative. At MESA, this means that teachers work with scholars to ensure they are deeply engaged in learning and support them to reach high levels, academically and socially. Scholars gain the necessary skills to be ready for college and career through a rigorous curriculum that strives to develop strong literacy and math skills and the ability to think critically, problem solve, collaborate, and become active citizens within their community.

CREW- Crew is an integral part of EL Education schools. Based on the concept that "we are all in this together," each classroom is a CREW, and the staff is a CREW. We will provide many opportunities for you to learn and participate in CREW activities throughout the year.

MESA has been designed to provide each scholar with a pathway to knowledge, understanding, and self-worth through the support of the adults closest to them - teachers and families. EL Education is a national non-profit organization that works with over 150 schools in 39 states to

design these learning pathways so they are rigorous, engaging, and address each student's specific needs. In EL schools, scholars and teachers are leaders of their own learning.

Scholars conduct fieldwork with local experts by gathering data, conducting background research, identifying solutions, and presenting their findings to families and community stakeholders at Celebrations of Learning. At MESA, these expeditions enhance the knowledge and skills that scholars are developing across subject areas.

EL Education is guided by the following ten design principles:

1. **The Primacy of Self-Discovery-** Learning happens best with emotion, challenge, and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. In EL Education schools, scholars undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher's primary task is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can.
2. **The Having of Wonderful Ideas-** Teaching in EL Education schools fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.
3. **The Responsibility for Learning-** Learning is both a personal process of discovery and social activity. Everyone learns both individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of an EL Education school encourages both scholars and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.
4. **Empathy and Caring-** Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected, and mutual trust exists. Learning groups are small in EL Education schools, with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child. Older scholars mentor younger ones, and scholars feel physically and emotionally safe.
5. **Success and Failure-** All scholars need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. It is also important for scholars to learn from their failures, persevere when things are hard, and learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.
6. **Collaboration and Competition-** Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Scholars are encouraged to compete, not against each other, but with their own personal best and rigorous standards of excellence.
7. **Diversity and Inclusion-** Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. In EL Education schools, scholars investigate and value their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.
8. **The Natural World-** A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Scholars learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.
9. **Solitude and Reflection-** Scholars and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need to exchange their reflections with other scholars and with adults.

10. Service and Compassion- We are crew, not passengers. Scholars and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others, and one of an EL Education school's primary functions is to prepare scholars with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service.

Safe-Structured, Supportive Learning Environment

MESA provides a learning environment where all scholars have clear expectations, are recognized for performance through formal "Celebrations of Learning" and learn the Habits of Scholarship that prepare them to be self-directed learners and to attain college/career success.

MESA implements the Expeditionary Learning's CREW model, to support scholars in learning about and demonstrating leadership in the school's core values. The term "crew" has its roots in the sport of sailing. On a sailboat, each person is considered part of the crew, there are no passengers. Thus each member plays a key role in making sure everyone gets safely back to shore. At MESA, we believe that each individual (scholars, staff, families, and community members) are essential to ensuring that our scholars "reach the shore" and complete their journey at MESA, ready for entry into a high school of their choice and on to a college or career. CREW takes place every morning, during service-learning projects, and throughout the school day. Our core values bind us together as a community- of students, families and staff members- to make sure every scholar not only achieves his/her learning goals but also reaches their fullest potential as a person.

Academics

Targeted Instruction

Frequent summative and formative assessments and reviews of scholars' work by teaching teams, coaches, and school leaders will inform the instruction scholars receive. Using the Response to Intervention model, scholars will be provided with specific academic support (interventions) based on their identified needs and progress in reading and mathematics. Families are updated on their scholar's academic growth through ongoing teacher communications and a Standards-based Report Card.

Assessment

At MESA, we strive to empower educators to improve instruction and scholars' achievement through the use of data obtained from a scholar's assessments. Staff are trained to understand assessment data and how to connect data to instructional practices. Scholars are considered to be seriously "at risk" academically, which we define as being 2 or more years behind their grade level in ELA and/or Math.

MESA administers Renaissance Learning's STAR assessment for Literacy (K5-8th grade) and Math (1st-8th grade). EL Skills Block is used as a primary literacy screener for K4-2nd grade. The Wisconsin Forward Exam is given for Math and Literacy for grades 3-8 and Science and Social Studies for grades 4 and 8.

Standards-Based Report Card

At MESA, we use a report card that describes a scholar's progress toward proficiency based on academic standards identified by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Currently, this includes the Wisconsin Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, Math, the Next Generation Science Standards, and the Wisconsin Model of Academic Standards for Social Studies. The report card also provides information on a scholar's work habits, behavior, and effort. Families are provided with support to understand the report card, and scholars will lead conferences with teachers and family members to describe what they have learned. Student-led conferences are mandatory- parents/ guardians may not opt-out of attending conferences.

Scoring Scale

According to our school report cards, we assess scholars using the performance measures: "Advanced", "Proficient", "Basic", and "Minimal". For grading purposes teachers from K-8th grades use standards-based curriculum while the following scoring scale when converting percentages:

Advanced 93-100%

Proficient 80-92%

Basic 60-79%

Minimal 0-59%

Promotion/Retention Requirement Policy

By collaborating with families, we aim to prepare all scholars for college and career-ready opportunities. However, if a scholar struggles to meet the school's academic expectations and our board's approval, we will consider them for retention. The criteria for retention are as follows: scholars who are two or more grade levels behind in reading, math, or both may be retained. We use standardized assessments, attendance data, classroom formal and informal assessments, and teacher observations when making promotion decisions. Teachers will notify parents/guardians at winter conferences if their scholar is at risk of being retained. The principal makes final decisions on all retention.

Classroom Technology Focus

MESA teachers and scholars will use various technology tools to support and enhance their learning in all subject areas, including learning expeditions. Focus areas will be on using technology to help scholars: access reading material, use software programs to practice skills, conduct research, communicate their learning, and practice interventions. Our computer lab is available for all classrooms. Chromebooks will support learning within and outside all classrooms.

Field Experiences

Field Experiences are an important part of the Expeditionary Learning process. Scholars gain a greater understanding of the relationship between what they learn in the classroom and how it connects with the broader community and world through field experiences.

We will try to work with you and your scholar to ensure they can attend field experiences. For scholars to participate in activities outside the school building, we expect them to demonstrate good citizenship and respect for classroom/school norms. If a scholar has behavior concerns, we will first ask the parent/guardian to attend with her/his scholar before excluding any scholar from the field experience.

A field experience permission form will be sent home and will include a description of each upcoming experience. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign and return the completed form to the classroom teacher for scholars to participate in the experience. Family members interested in chaperoning a field experience should contact their scholar's teacher.

Parent Involvement/Volunteer Opportunities

Ways To Get Involved At MESA

At MESA, we do not just enroll scholars; we enroll families. We believe that the more families participate--as advocates, as members of school councils, with fundraisers, as classroom/school volunteers, as learning support at home--the more likely their scholar is to achieve at high levels. Please contact your scholar's teachers or the school office for more information about how to get involved. Some suggestions follow, but please feel free to suggest other ideas you might have.

Parent/Family Volunteers

All families are encouraged to volunteer in the school community. Please contact the school to speak to the Dean of Family Engagement, the office staff, or your scholar's teachers about how you can best use your skills and/or talents in your scholar's classroom, the school, or afterschool programs.

Volunteer Opportunities

1. Classroom/Library/Tutoring Help--We are always looking for volunteers to help in our school! We can use assistance with tutoring, reading, copying, cutting, laminating, or other similar tasks. Please speak to your scholar's teachers for other ways to assist.
2. Field Experiences/Special Projects--We often need help with field experiences or field trips in the form of chaperoning. Other special projects include helping with the school garden, healthy meals or fitness/recess activities, and art projects.
3. CREW--Crew is a meeting that is done every day in your scholar's classroom and/or in the gym with other grade levels.
4. Celebrations of Learning--At the end of each Learning Expedition, scholars will share their learning with families and the larger community through a Celebration of Learning. Attendance Celebration events are required for every MESA scholar. Celebrations of Learning may take the form of book talks, student-led tours, demonstrations, or displays. These

presentations are a team effort, and each scholar's contribution to the group's success will be part of their grade in the applicable subject area. Dates for the Celebrations of Learning will be announced at least one month in advance.

5. Professional Services/Expertise--Often, a family member has a special skill, expertise, experience, or hobby that can be brought into the classroom or contribute to a school-wide project. Examples of classroom contributions include a nurse providing feedback on a scholar's health care presentation, an artist - teaching animation skills, or a war veteran discussing his or her experiences. Please contact the principal or your scholar's teacher if you have a service or expertise that you would be willing to share.

6. Parent Meetings--The Dean of Family Engagement will host bi-monthly parent engagement meetings that support parents' academic and social development. These meetings are informational and educational and will create opportunities, increase awareness, and strengthen the community. Parents will be notified about the meetings through text alerts and school newsletters.

Volunteer Background Checks

All overnight chaperones and regular classroom volunteers (those who volunteer in classrooms more than five days per year) must undergo background checks and attend volunteer/chaperone training.

Admissions

Enrolling Your Child

Fall open enrollment begins in March with specified starting dates each year. Priority enrollment is given to returning scholars in good standing and siblings.

Only applications that include all required information (i.e., proof of residency, birth certificate for new kindergarten scholars, immunization record, etc.) will be considered for admission. Parent/guardians must also review and submit the Family-School Crew Pledge as part of their application.

If more applications are received than seats are available in a grade, a random drawing will be held at a specified time, typically the first week in April, to select which scholars for admission. Any remaining seats available will be assigned on a first-come, first serve basis. Scholars not selected during the lottery will be placed on a waiting list.

The Family-School Crew Pledge

We believe that families are the most important people in their scholars' lives. We know a great deal about the conditions necessary for a child's brain to learn. Therefore, we ask for your support to ensure that your scholar gets the most from our educational program by asking you to agree to support your scholar's success in the following ways:

We/I will...

- Make sure that my scholar attends school every day and arrives by 7:25
- Check my scholar's backpack daily for homework and assignment sheets (K4-5th grade) or agenda (6th-8th grade)

- Make sure that my scholar completes his/her homework daily
- Provide a quiet space for my scholar to study and complete assigned work
- Make sure that my scholar reads at least thirty minutes per day
- If necessary, support my scholar in the school's effort to help my scholar achieve academic and behavioral expectations.
- Help make the school safe and welcoming by supporting our school-wide discipline plan and attending mandatory parent meetings, including scholar-led conferences
- Make sure that my scholar wears the required school uniform daily
- Attend scheduled scholar-led conferences per academic year (required)
- Attend at least 2 (two) Learning Expedition Events, Field Experience trips, Expedition activities at school, or Celebrations of Learning with my scholar each academic year
- Read and follow the policies and expectations as stated in the MESA Family Handbook ● Sign and adhere to the Parent, Scholar, Staff Agreement to Success

Communication

Ongoing communication between home and school is critical to your scholar's success at MESA. Because we provide a different kind of educational program, you may have questions about your scholar's daily classroom work and his or her progress toward the learning standards. We encourage parents/guardians to contact teachers via email, attend conferences, call, and attend school functions to fully understand your scholar's educational experience and progress. Most important information is communicated through our weekly email and/or text alerts. Parents/guardians should ensure that the school office has your updated email address and phone number.

Communicating Concerns

Family involvement is a very special element of our culture at MESA, and we strive to make our relationships with families as productive and positive as possible. However, there are times when families have a school-related academic, behavioral, or organizational concern. We welcome input, and while we can't guarantee that each suggestion will be adopted or that every issue will be resolved as you wish, we can guarantee that concerns will be heard and that feedback will be thoughtfully considered.

There are many venues for families to express concerns or pose questions. Parent/guardian satisfaction surveys are used to help us improve our school. MESA staff will communicate with families via phone, email, or in person.

Newsletter

School newsletters called “The Eagle’s Nest” will be shared electronically monthly on Tuesday. “The Eagle’s Nest” has critical information about upcoming school events (i.e., dress-down days, incentive celebrations, etc.). Scholars who meet the criteria to participate in school-wide incentives will have their names in the newsletter. Parents/guardians must read “The Eagle’s Nest” carefully each week to remain informed of important information.

Parent Text Alerts

The school has implemented a text alert system that allows parents/guardians to receive texts and phone messages with important school notifications. All parent(s)/guardian(s) should be sure to sign up to ensure that you don’t miss any important information. **Please text “eagles” to 80123 to sign up.**

School Closing (Due to Inclement Weather)

If Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) announces school closure due to inclement weather, MESA will also close. Listen to the radio or television for the announcement of school closings. If weather conditions make travel to school hazardous, but MPS does not close, it is recommended that parents use their judgment in bringing their scholars to school. Once the school day has started, the school will not be canceled early in anticipation of bad weather later in the day. In these cases, it is up to the parent(s)/guardian(s) to decide if they want to pick their scholar up early.

School Schedule

School begins promptly at 7:25 a.m. Breakfast is available from 7:25-8:00 a.m. The instructional day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 2:25 p.m. Scholars may not be dropped off before 7:25 a.m.

- Scholars must be picked up by 2:25 p.m.

Uniform Policy

All scholars are required to follow the school uniform/dress code policy. A school uniform policy helps focus scholars on their school work rather than their appearance, encouraging school identity, pride, and solidarity between scholars.

All scholars shall wear their uniforms daily. The school will ensure compliance with the school uniform policy using incentives and issuing consequences when scholars are not in compliance.

School Uniform/Dress Code

K4-8th Grade

A) Bottoms

- Solid tan/navy blue/khaki pants

- Solid tan/navy blue/khaki walking shorts/skorts/skirts (knee length when standing) • Worn at the waist (**no sagging**)
- Belts or suspenders are required of all scholars wearing bottoms with belt loops • Navy, black, or white tights/leggings(solid)

B) Tops

- MESA Blue polo with school insignia will be sold at JL Marcus 5300 W. Fond du Lac Ave.
- Tucked in at the waist
- Cold weather tops- scholars may wear navy blue, black, or white fleece/cardigans (optional with school insignia for purchase at MESA). MESA uniform tops must be worn underneath.
- Navy, black, or white (solid) thermals may be worn under uniform shirts

C) Shoes

- Casual shoes /Tennis shoes
- Boots may be worn in the winter months to school. Grades 3 and up must change into tennis shoes upon arriving at school. K4-2nd grade scholars may wear boots to school and throughout the school day in the winter when snow is outside.

Scholars will be able to dress out of uniform for scheduled special events. Parents will be notified prior to each out-of-uniform day.

Attendance Policy

Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy staff expect to maintain a 96% attendance or better for each scholar. Staff is relying on parents/guardians to help us meet this expectation. It is equally imperative that scholars arrive at school on time. Breakfast is available from 7:25 a.m. - 7:45 a.m. The morning crew begins at 7:45 a.m. The academic instructional day begins at 7:25 a.m. Scholars arriving after 7:45 a.m. are considered tardy and must obtain a tardy pass from the office upon entering the building. The expectation is that scholars arrive every day on time, prepared to learn. We understand that emergency situations happen. Scholars picked up before 2:25 p.m. are considered early dismissal and will be marked as such.

According to Wisconsin State Statute 118.16, students that have been truant five (5) part or whole days in a semester are considered habitually truant. Truancy can also be considered intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the intent of s. [118.15](#).

School dismissal is a high-traffic part of the day. Teachers are working to close out the instructional day and prepare scholars to dismiss. It is imperative for the safety of our scholars and staff that everyone follows the dismissal protocols. We have the following dismissal options for scholars:

1. Bus Pick Up
2. Parent Pick Up.

3. Walkers. (All walkers should have a written notice on file from the parent/guardian stating that they are to walk home.)

To help ensure the safety of our scholars and staff, all visitors, including parents, must check into the office upon arrival before visiting classrooms. Please note that this includes morning drop-off. Visitors are not permitted in the building after 2:00 p.m. Parents coming to the building during this time will not be given access. Parents, it is your responsibility to inform the office of any changes to your scholar's dismissal plans at least one hour before dismissal (by 1:00 p.m.).

Missing school for appointments

Parents/guardians are asked to schedule appointments outside of school time. Any time scholars are out of school, they miss valuable academic instruction. We strongly encourage parents/guardians to plan ahead using intercession and school out days for scheduling appointments.

Excused and unexcused absences

Some absences and incidents of tardiness are excused, and some are unexcused (see list below). The number of absences and incidents of tardiness will be noted on scholar (student) records.

Please call the school each day that a child will be absent or tardy (including early picked up). Please note that in order to record absences as "excused," we must also receive a written note upon the child's return to school. Absences may be deemed "excused" only if the reason falls into the category of excused absences listed below:

Excused

- Personal illness
- Death in the family
- Religious observance
- Quarantined babysitting
- Required court appearance
- Attendance at health clinic/hospitalization
- High school testing and/or shadowing
- Exceptional circumstances approved for principal/designee

Unexcused

- Oversleeping
- Transportation issues (including missed bus)
- Family vacation
- Uniform issues
- Incomplete homework

After School Caregivers

Teachers take great care to dismiss scholars to the proper bus or adult caregiver. We are mindful of daily changes in families' after-school arrangements and ask for your cooperation in informing us of those changes. Please inform teachers in writing for each day that your scholar(s) will deviate from his or her usual routine. If unexpected changes occur, please contact the main office before 1:00 p.m. After **1:00 p.m., office staff can no longer accommodate your requests.**

School Visitor Policy

All visitors must first report to the main office, sign the visitor's log book, and obtain a "badge" before visiting classrooms. Visitor "badges" must be worn at all times while in school. Each visitor must sign out and return the "badge" before departing. These precautions are necessary for the safety of our scholars and staff. Families are welcome to volunteer or observe in classrooms. However, we ask that parents/guardians do not disrupt the education of their child or of other children or attempt to conduct individual conversations with the teacher, educational assistant, or scholars during instructional time unless approved by the teacher or administrator.

Personal Items to Remain at Home

The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items, including those on the bus. Scholars must keep the following items at home to ensure a focused learning environment: gum, soda, candy, trading cards, video games, toys, lip gloss/makeup, glitter, perfume/cologne, etc.

Should your scholar bring any of these items to school, we will ask them to put them away and take them home. If scholars fail to comply, staff members will keep the item until the end of the day and have the scholar take it home after school. If it continues to be an issue, staff will keep the item until the parent/guardian comes to retrieve it.

Phone Policy

Due to school safety, cell phones are not permitted to be operated on school property.

If your scholar needs a cell phone to communicate with you after the school day, it must be turned off as scholars enter MESA and given to the classroom teacher in grades K4-5th grade. Middle school scholars are expected to keep phones in their lockers. In the event of an emergency or special circumstance, staff members will permit the use of a school phone. The use of a cell phone will result in confiscation of the cell phone until the end of the day the first time. After the second violation, the staff member will confiscate the cell phone and communicate with the parent(s) to arrange to pick up the cell phone. For the third violation, the cell phone will be submitted to the department dean, who will contact the parent. Habitual violators of the cell phone policy will lose the privilege of bringing a cell phone to school.

We must maintain a safe and orderly environment for all our scholars and staff. To ensure that the school is safe, we reserve the right to search any and all persons or belongings on school property

for prohibited or illegal materials. Such searches can be random or with reasonable suspicion and include scholars' backpacks, person, pockets, lockers, etc.

Homework Policy

At MESA, homework is designed to help scholars practice the skills and concepts that are taught during the school day. This is an important part of a scholar's education. Homework reinforces what happens in school, as well as prepares scholars for their life's work. At MESA, we expect homework to be completed nightly between Monday and Thursday. Homework will not be

assigned during intercessions or breaks exceeding three days. Homework will be tracked by each scholar's teacher and posted.

The estimated time students will spend on homework each night will be:

K4-2nd 30 to 45 minutes. At least 30 minutes for nightly reading

3rd-5th 45 to 60 minutes At least 30 minutes for nightly reading

6th-8th 60 to 90 minutes At least 30 minutes for nightly reading

These times include at least 30 minutes of nightly reading. Homework may take more or less time, depending on the scholar and the situation. If scholars spend more or less time on homework than is thought necessary, please contact your scholar's teachers. If an assignment is completed in school, it is expected to be taken home and reviewed by a parent or guardian.

Parents/Guardians should be checking on their scholar's homework nightly to ensure that the mission of the school is supported and that scholars recognize that parents/guardians are partners in their education. Last-minute situations may arise that could make it difficult to complete an assignment. In these cases, a signed note or message to the teacher explaining the reason why the assignment could not be completed is required for a time extension. If a scholar is absent, the scholar must complete the homework no later than one day after returning to school. If homework is not fully completed, including not having a note from a parent/guardian, the scholar may need to miss recess, choice time, and a possible conference required. Teachers and/or administrators may plan incentives for homework completion. Nonetheless, homework is a requirement for all scholars.

Transportation

MESA has a limited transportation area for scholars. Please contact the school office to see if your scholar(s) qualify for bus transportation.

A listing of bus norms and expectations to be followed will be provided at the start of the school year to participating bus riders. We ask parent(s)/guardian(s) to remember that bus transportation is a privilege and will only be offered to students/families that consistently follow all norms. Following the norms ensures that all scholars are safe and arrive at school/home on time.

Bus Expectations

- Students are expected to be at their bus stop 10 minutes before their scheduled pick-up time. School bus drivers are not able to wait for late students.

- Students are expected to respect the property of others while waiting at their bus stop.
- Use of profanity is not permitted at bus stops.
- Students must stay away from the street, when waiting for the bus. Students should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before approaching the bus to board.
- Students departing the bus must move away from the bus.
- If students must cross the street, they should always cross 10 feet in front of the bus so the driver can clearly monitor the student's location. Students must wait for the bus driver to signal students to cross the street.
- Fighting, harassment, intimidation, and horseplay are forbidden at bus stops.
- No use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs on the bus or at bus stops.
- Students are to immediately follow the directions of the driver.
- Students are to sit in their seats facing forward.
- Using profanity is not permitted on the bus, and students are to talk quietly.
- Students are to keep all parts of their bodies inside the bus.
- Students are to keep their arms, legs, and belongings to themselves.
- Fighting, harassment, intimidation, and horseplay are forbidden on the bus.
- Students are not to throw any objects on the bus.
- All articles that students bring onto the bus with them must be able to fit on the student's lap in their bus seat.
- Do not bring any weapons or dangerous objects on the bus.
- Students are not to damage the school bus.
- Bus drivers have the right to assign seats to students.

Some items not allowed on school buses

- animals or insects
- hazardous materials (knives, guns, flammable solutions)
- oversized school projects
- perfumed items such as hair, body sprays (pumps and/or aerosols), fingernail polish
- balloons (may get loose and distract the driver)

Some items permitted on school buses

- a backpack type bag
- band instruments (small enough to be contained on the student's lap)

Bus Discipline

Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will apply to all routes. Decisions regarding a scholar's ability to ride the bus in connection with co-curricular and extra-curricular events (i.e., field trips or competitions) will be at the discretion of the school's administration team. Parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified of any suspension of bus privileges.

Scholars K4-8:

* Written warning

- * 1st offense - 1-3 day(s) bus suspension
- * 2nd offense - 5 day bus suspension
- * 3rd offense - bus suspension for the remainder of the school year.

Special Ed. scholars will receive discipline in conjunction with the scholar's I.E.P.

Based on the severity of a scholar's conduct, more serious consequences may be imposed at any time. Depending on the nature of the offense, consequences such as suspension or expulsion from school may also result from school bus/bus stop misconduct.

Records of school bus/bus stop misconduct will be forwarded to the individual school building and will be retained in the same manner as other student discipline records. Reports of serious misconduct will be provided to the Department of Public Safety. Records may also be maintained in the transportation office.

Scholar's damaging school buses will be responsible for the damage. Failure to pay such damages/ restitution (or make arrangements to pay) within two weeks will result in the loss of bus privileges until damages are paid.

In cases involving criminal conduct (i.e., assault, weapons, possession, or vandalism), the transportation office will press charges on the student involved and will inform the Superintendent, local law enforcement officials, and the Department of Public Safety.

Health

Early Dismissal Due to Illness/Accident

The decision to send a scholar home is made by an administrator or administrative assistant with notification of the classroom teacher. Scholars who are vomiting, suspected of having a fever, or suspected of having a contagious illness preventing them from learning are subject to go home. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone of the nature of the illness and will be asked to pick up the scholar. Please provide the school with emergency contact information so that you, or the person you designate, may be reached at all times. MESA expects all scholars to be picked up within one hour of notification.

If your scholar becomes injured at school, parents or guardians will be contacted. We will administer emergency first aid, and an accident report will be completed for you to share with your scholar's physician. In the event of a serious injury requiring immediate emergency care, 911 will be called. An administrator or other staff person will accompany the scholar to the hospital if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.

Medication

According to Wisconsin State Regulations, school personnel cannot administer medication (prescription and non-prescription) to scholars without a signed Medication Release Form from

a doctor. This form is available in the school office. All medication must be in its original prescription bottle.

Immunization

Wisconsin State Law requires all children enrolling in a Wisconsin elementary school to be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, and rubella. These requirements can be waived only if a properly signed health or religious exemption is filed with the school.

Breakfast/Lunch Program

MESA participates in the free breakfast and lunch program. This means that all scholars receive free breakfast and lunch.

Healthier Foods/Drinks Policy

We strongly encourage and promote a healthy and balanced diet. We respect that every parent/guardian has the right to determine what their children can/cannot eat, but at MESA, we do not allow scholars to bring family-size chips or soda. We ask that parents limit scholars to one small bag of chips to be included in their lunches. We will monitor what scholars are eating and will make recommendations to parents. Fast food is discouraged from being brought on school grounds. If parents elect to bring fast food, they must sign their scholars out and sign them back in after their designated lunch period. **Scholars do not have access to microwaves or refrigerators. No exceptions.**

Food recommended to be brought on campus: Water, fruits, vegetables, lean meat, whole grain carbohydrates (brown rice, whole grain bread, and pasta), and juices that are made with 100% fruit juice) 12 oz. or less per child.

Please contact the principal or department administrator about healthy food/drink options and policies if you have questions.

During meal times scholars will adhere to established norms including, but not limited to:

- Display Habits of Scholarship
- Deposit recyclable and trash in the designated barrels
- Set a goal of a “zero waste lunch.”
- Refrain from littering and throwing food or any objects
- Receive permission to leave the designated eating area.

Birthday celebrations, holidays, and special events

Birthday celebrations will be held at the end of the day during classroom choice time only. (2:00 p.m.). Lunchtime birthday celebrations must be approved by the homeroom teacher. Parents should request the teacher three days in advance by note or phone call, so appropriate planning can occur. We understand that children and families observe a variety of holidays and family celebrations. Notify your scholar’s teacher if you do not want them to participate. While celebrations are exciting for children, they must be planned so it does not interfere with their

learning. Therefore, birthday celebrations cannot happen during instruction. Also, scholars are expected to dress in uniform except for preplanned dress-up/down days. Certain celebrations may be scheduled on out-of-uniform days. For safety reasons, full cakes and balloons are not allowed. No exceptions. Balloons can be a great distraction and a safety hazard on school buses.

Supplies/textbooks

Scholars will be given a list of supplies to bring on the first day of school. Shopping for school supplies is an exciting event for many children. Ensure that your scholar has the necessary supplies before the first day of school. Families must reimburse the school for any damage or loss of textbooks, library books, or supplies, including technology provided to them during the school year.

Expectations for Scholarly Behavior

We promote a school culture that balances safety and structure within a caring, supportive school community. Scholars work together to solve problems, conflicts, and behavior challenges. We believe that scholars' growth as kind and respectful citizens requires becoming active members of a caring community, focusing on problem-solving and decision-making so they can work towards handling conflicts that arise in the best way possible.

When scholars engage in challenging work, receive academic support, and are held to the school's high behavioral expectations, they are less likely to disrupt the class. Our focus on character and academics and our use of multiple approaches to classroom management-- including teacher presence, norming, routines, open communication, and PBIS (positive behavior intervention systems)--address discipline problems in a respectful way.

Discipline Procedures

Our school believes in proactive discipline and providing scholars with skills to solve problems and work collaboratively. When necessary, the following procedures will be used to address misbehavior based on the severity of the situation:

- conferences between scholars and teacher
- removal from the group within the classroom
- removal from the classroom to meet with the Dean of students for redirection and reflection with the goal of being restored to return to the classroom
- Innovative consequences and interventions created and worked out between scholars, teachers, deans, and/or principal
- detention (lunch, before, or after school)
- conferences between scholar, teacher, and parent(s)/guardian(s) (these may include the Principal and/or the Department Administrator, as needed)
- suspension
- expulsion

In all disciplinary matters, scholars will be given notice and will have the opportunity to present their version of the facts and situation leading to the imposition of disciplinary sanctions to the staff member imposing such sanctions. The latter half of the list (suspension, expulsion) is enacted in cases involving the health and safety of oneself or others or continuous misbehavior which disrupts the educational program. Parents/guardians will be notified in writing in all cases of suspension and expulsion hearings. For a complete description of the school's discipline policy and procedures, please contact the Principal or Dean of Students. MESA will follow the MPS disciplinary policy and handbook.

Discipline Plan

As an EL Education (Expeditionary Learning) school, a core component to the curriculum is creating opportunities for scholars to explore new ideas, collaborate with peers, and take risks as they push themselves to achieve high levels. This can only happen when scholars feel safe emotionally and physically. Therefore - we have strong expectations for behavior.

The purpose of MESA's Discipline Plan is to encourage and support appropriate scholar behavior throughout the school, including the classrooms, hallways, restrooms, playgrounds, cafeteria, gym, assemblies, field experiences, etc., in order to maintain a safe and supportive environment for learning AND help scholars develop into respectful and considerate human beings.

All adults in the building will be expected to serve as role models for behavior that is respectful and supportive. Staff will teach, practice, and praise appropriate behavior as reflected in the Habits of Scholarship: respect, integrity, social justice, collaboration, perseverance, and accountability.

In conjunction with a school-wide Discipline Plan, the school will maintain a consistent positive behavior recognition plan using Class Dojo that will outline frequent, tangible rewards that children are a part of or earn. As much as possible, these "rewards" will inspire intrinsic motivation, as needed in the "real" world.

- Misbehavior will be treated as a learning opportunity for both scholars and teachers.
- Staff will seek to understand the nature of the misbehavior or conflict, consequences will be logical, and clearly communicated.
- Positive behavior will occur through establishing and clear communication of scholars = behavior expectations supported by a consistent and fair structure.
- While implementing this plan, MESA staff will be aware of and accommodate individual scholar disabilities and challenges. Individualized behavior plans may be developed for some scholars.

ClassDojo

ClassDojo is used to keep parents/guardians informed of their scholar's behavior and character expectations, including but not limited to uniforms, homework, and conduct. Teachers will share photos from class, important updates and wonderful moments. Additionally, we use ClassDojo so that scholars are regularly recognized and rewarded for demonstrating strong character,

academic effort, and achievement. Our six Habits of Scholarship include integrity, respect, accountability, social justice, perseverance, and collaboration.

How Do Scholars Earn Points:

- Uniform (1 point)
- Daily Behavior Log signed by the parent (1 point)
- Homework submission (1 point) (all assigned work must be fully completed)
- Attendance (1 point)
- Scholars can earn points from all teachers and staff for modeling our 6 habits of scholarship, which are integrity, respect, accountability, social justice, perseverance, and collaboration (1 point each)

School-Based Incentives

School-Based Incentives for Scholars will be awarded by the Department Dean and include some of the following:

- Dance parties
- Special treats
- Field trips
- Popcorn/Ice Cream/Pizza/Nacho parties
- Lunch and/or Dinner with the Principal/AP or Dean

Scholars who meet or exceed the school-wide goal will qualify for the incentives. The incentive dates will be shared in our parent newsletter, including the names of scholars who qualify for participation. See below for the school goal.

Administrative Actions for Office Referrals

Generally, the administrator will follow the continuum below. However, higher-level offenses will be dealt with greater measures of discipline.

- Meet with scholars to understand cause of behavior, discussion of future actions; possible family contact and/or probation (if severe).
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) contact to address behavior concern; detention or probation of detention; individual consequences specific to an infraction: i.e., clean up, isolated lunch, additional work, apologies, restorative justice practices, etc.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) conference; detention; suspension or pending suspension
- Suspension and parent/guardian conference; possible additional requirements to return to class; multiple days of suspension; parent/guardian conferences are required: scholars may be referred for placement in an alternative school or recommended for expulsion.

Levels of Infractions

- **Level 1.** This is the lowest level. The teacher or staff member in charge addresses the behaviors. The behaviors are not referred to the office, unless they are excessive in terms of damage, loss, disruption or injury; whereupon they become level 2 events. Any level 1 behavior that shows a pattern of repetition, despite teacher intervention, will be referred to the office as a level 2.
- **Level 2.** Moderate behaviors cannot go unaddressed. These behaviors may be referred to the office for administrative action. The administrator will choose actions based on the facts generally following the continuum below. Repeated behaviors will result in increased penalties and may be handled as level 3 behaviors. Behaviors that are excessive in terms of damage, loss, disruption or injury transfer to level 3 events.
- **Level 3.** This category is considered serious offenses. It includes dangerous, defiant and highly disruptive behaviors. Lower level acts that continue regardless of the best efforts of all interventions may be handled at level 3. Repeated behaviors at level 3 may result in recommendation to an alternative program or expulsion.
- **Level 4.** Most serious offenses, which may result in contacting and actions by law enforcement, charges being filed and/or removal of the scholar from Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy, ULC Charter School. This category includes repeated fights or assaults, assault on a staff member, possession of deadly weapons, and possession, sale, or transfer of drugs.

Behavioral Violation Codes

Typical Behaviors Associated with Infraction Level 1-3 Infractions

- Scholars show respect by refraining from throwing objects, teasing, name-calling, or “just playing” in a physically aggressive manner.
- Scholars show respect by refraining from intimidating, threatening, or using aggression.
- Scholars show respect by not using profanity or offensive gestures.
- Scholars walk in the building. They are not loud, disruptive or defiant in the cafeteria and throughout the entire building and on the grounds.
- Scholars refrain from the use of physical force (fighting).
- Scholars refrain from serious physical contact, specifically (but not limited to) punches, which is strictly prohibited.
- Scholars refrain from engaging in harassment of any staff member or other scholars. This shall include, but is not limited to, name-calling, stories, jokes, pictures, or objects that are offensive to one’s gender or gender identity, race, color, national origin, religion, or disability, unwanted touching, sexual comments, and spreading rumors.
- Acts of retaliation
- Sexual harassment will result in an office referral. Repeated offenses may result in action by law enforcement.

- Scholars will not be in possession of any tobacco products. Students will not use tobacco products in the building or on the grounds.
- Scholars will leave all electronic devices and other valuable property at home, including, but not limited to; iPods/MP3 players, radios, electronic games, telecommunication devices, and toys. Items will be confiscated and returned to parents only. Please refer to our Cell Phone Policy regarding cell phone usage.
- Scholars will not falsify documents or signatures. Scholars will not act deceptively or dishonestly; including a scholar copying another scholar's work and using it as his/her own or allowing a scholar to copy his/her work.
- Scholars will not steal.
- Scholars will not engage in games of chance involving money.
- Scholars will not engage in the destruction or defacement of public or personal property. • Restitution may be required.
- Victims of aggression are required to report concerns to the teacher(s) or administrators.

May be recommended for expulsion (Level 4):

- Scholars will not possess, use, be under the influence of, sell, or transfer alcoholic beverages, narcotics, drugs, counterfeit controlled substances, look-alike drugs, or other intoxicating substances, nor possess, sell, or transfer drug paraphernalia on school property, en route to or from school, or at any location of school-sponsored activity.
- Scholars will not possess fireworks or dangerous instruments, which include any instrument, article, or substance readily capable of causing death or serious physical injury. Dangerous instruments shall include pocket knives and knives of all types. Students shall not have a look-alike weapon.
- Scholars will not possess any deadly weapon from which a projectile, readily capable of producing death or other serious physical injuries, may be discharged i.e., gun, any knife; nightstick, or other club; artificial knuckles made from metal, plastic, or other similar hard material.
- Any egregious behaviors or offense deemed extremely inappropriate by the Principal

Notice of Suspension/ Expulsion

Notification of Suspension: Before any suspension, the scholar shall be advised of the reason for the proposed suspension. A letter from the Principal or AP will be sent to the scholar's parent(s)/guardian(s), when the scholar is assigned in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension, or is recommended for expulsion.

Notice of In-School Suspension: The suspension notice for in-school suspension shall include at least the following information:

- Reason(s) for the suspension and date(s) of suspension are to be clearly stated

- A parent/guardian is required to participate in a conference with the Principal or Dean of Students in order for the scholar to be readmitted to the regular classroom
- The scholar will not be allowed to participate in classroom and school activities during the suspension period; and appeal procedures shall be clearly stated in detail.

Notice of Out-of-School Suspension The suspension notice for out-of-school suspension (fewer than five days) shall include at least the following information:

- Reason(s) for the suspension and the date(s) of suspension are to be clearly stated
 - A parent/guardian must come to school for a conference with the Principal or AP for the scholar to be readmitted to school
 - The scholar will not be allowed to participate in classroom and school activities during the suspension period.
 - The scholar is not to go on school property; appeal procedures shall be clearly stated.
- For Expulsion, MESA will act in accordance with Milwaukee Public Schools' policies and procedures regarding the expulsion of scholars.

Scholars with Disabilities

Scholars with disabilities may receive disciplinary actions, in accordance with the state and federal law, for inappropriate behavior. School personnel may order a change in the placement of a scholar with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, or suspend the scholar for not more than ten (10) days to the extent they could do so with a scholar without disabilities. (Note: A suspension for more than five (5) days for a scholar with a disability is available only if the Principal or his or her designee has recommended expulsion of the scholar to the Board.)

School personnel may order a change in placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for the same amount of time that a non-disabled scholar would be subject to discipline, but for not more than forty-five (45) days if the scholar:

1. Carries a weapon to school or to a school-sponsored function; or
2. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance at a school-sponsored function. In such a case, the district must develop or revise the scholar's functional behavior assessment plan.
3. If the discipline for the special education scholar involves a change of placement for more than ten (10) days, e.g., an expulsion, then the school must hold an IEP meeting to determine whether the behavior was manifested by the scholar's disability.
4. If the behavior was not a manifestation of the scholar's disability, the scholar may be subject to the same disciplinary actions as a non-disabled scholar, except the school must continue to provide an appropriate education to the scholar.
5. If the behavior was related to the scholar's disability, the scholar may not be subject to disciplinary action for periods longer than ten (10) school days.

A scholar who is not yet determined eligible for special education and related services may assert any of these protections in response to disciplinary actions if the school system had “knowledge” that the scholar was a child with a disability before the behavior incident. The school system is deemed to have knowledge if:

1. The parent of the scholar has expressed concern in writing to school personnel that the scholar is in need of special education or related services;
2. Behavior or performance of the scholar demonstrates the need for such services;
3. The parent of the scholar has requested an evaluation of the child for purposes of determining if the scholar is in need of special education or related services; or
4. The teacher of the scholar, or other school personnel, expressed concern about the behavior or performance of the child to the director of special education or to other school personnel.

If a parent requests an evaluation of a regular education child who is suspended or expelled, the evaluation must be expedited. Pending the results of the evaluation, the child shall remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities.

Out-of-School Suspension

1. Should the parent(s) disagree with a suspension of five (5) consecutive days or fewer, the parent may appeal the decision of the school as follows:
2. Appeal requests must be made in writing by the parent to the Principal. Such a written request must be filed with the Principal within three school days of the notice of suspension, or the right to review and appeal is waived.
3. If the parent is dissatisfied with the Principal’s decision, he or she may appeal the decision to the ULC Executive Director or designee by filing a written request of appeal within five school days, or the right to further appeal is waived.
4. In cases of immediate appeal, if the Principal determines that the student’s presence at school does not create a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption, the student may be allowed to continue in school on a regular basis until the appeal is considered. A favorable decision will allow the student to continue in school, whereas a decision supporting the Principal will require the student to serve the full day’s suspension beginning the next school day after receiving notice of the decision. In situations where the student is excluded during the appeal process and the appeal is ultimately favorable to the student, opportunity will be provided for the completion of make-up assignments.

MESA will act in accordance with Milwaukee Public Schools policies and procedures regarding the appeals process of scholars.

Interventions and Family Involvement Required

We promote a positive school culture and reward scholars for meeting our cultural expectations because it fosters a healthy school atmosphere and prepares them for college and career opportunities. We also rely on family support and involvement when school-wide interventions fail to result in positive behavioral outcomes for scholars. **Parents are required to get involved and attend mandatory meetings at the following points.**

1. If a scholar's weekly average points drop below the 59% range, “needs immediate improvement” for two consecutive weeks within the current trimester, a parent must meet with the Department Administrator, Dean of Family Engagement, scholar, and homeroom (HR) teacher.
2. If a scholar’s daily points drop below 39%, three or more days within one school week, the parent must meet with the Department Administrator, Dean of Family Engagement, scholar, and HR teacher
3. If a scholar is absent 5 days from school (unexcused), the parent/guardian must meet with the Dean of Students, scholar, and HR teacher.
4. If a scholar is absent 10 days from school (unexcused), the parent must meet with the Dean of scholar, and HR teacher, Parent and Learning Liaison, and social worker. At this point scholars may be retained. A referral to the district attorney may be made by the school.
5. If a scholar is absent 15 days from school (unexcused), parents must meet with the Dean of Students, scholar, and HR teacher, Parent and Liaison, Social Worker, and Principal. A referral to the district attorney may be made. Scholars may be retained.
6. 3 tardies (late arrival and early dismissals) count as 1 full absence.

A mandatory parent meeting that is the result of any of the 5 actions above may result in a scholar being placed on probation, or withdrawn from the school.