

Merriam Cherry Street Elementary

Student Handbook

2019-2020



Bryan Long, Principal

Stacie Eckles, Assistant Administrator

Contact Information

Merriam Cherry Street Elementary

1125 Cherry Street, Panama City, FL 32405

Office: 850-767-1480

Fax: 850-747-5499

Website:

Twitter: @mcherryst #mcsbelieves

Facebook: @MerriamCherryStreetElementarySchool

Cafeteria: 850-872-4724

Bay BASE: 850-767-1490

Bay District Schools 850-767-4100

Bay District Schools Transportation Department: 850-767-4494

Important Times

Gates Open: 7:05 AM

Morning Bell 7:25 AM

Tardy Bell 7:30 AM

Dismissal Bell 2:00 PM

Merriam Cherry Street Schoolwide Expectations

Prepared: I am ready to learn.

Respectful: I am polite and kind.

Independent: I keep my hands, feet, and objects to myself.

Dependable: I listen and follow directions.

Engaged: I work hard on the task at hand.

Registration/Parent Portal

Bay District Schools has an online registration process. All parents **MUST** complete the online process each year. All school registration/updates must be completed through the BDS Parent Portal website. To register for Parent Portal, you must be signed up and have a valid password. **Your child may only be checked out to the authorized people that are identified by you in the Parent Portal system.** If you do not have computer access, you may register your child in person as well.

Attendance

Students are expected to be in school, to be on time, and to stay all day unless prohibited by illness or other serious crisis. Attendance incentives are offered to students who attend school regularly. Florida Law 232.01F.S requires children ages 6-16 to be in regular attendance in school and holds parent accountable for meeting this requirement (232.09F.S.S). Your child is in jeopardy of violating these statutes as indicated below:

- 5 or more absences (excused or unexcused) in a month
- 10 or more absences (excused or unexcused) in the past 90 days, Enforcement of school attendance 232.17F.S. School Board Policy 7.10r; 7.10S
- 15 or more unexcused absences in the past 90 days, Habitual Truant 39.01F.S

An absence is defined as being more than 5 minutes tardy, leaving more than 15 minutes early, or missing more than a half of a day of school or class period. Criteria for approved absences as stated by the School Board include: illness, medical care, death in the family, legal reasons, religious holidays, pre-approved family leave, or school sanctioned activities. Parents are required to justify each absence of the student within 24 hours of the absence with a written excuse to the school. If the above absences are found unexcused, you or your child may also be at risk for:

- Notification to AFDC: we are required to notify the AFDC office when recipients of the AFDC are not attending school regularly. This could result in a reduction of benefits.
- Court action for truancy.

Protecting Instructional Time

We want the very best educational experience for your child. In order to ensure the best learning environment possible, it is crucial that we protect our instructional time and keep classroom interruptions to a minimum.

- If you would like to visit your child's classroom, you must provide a 24 hour notice to the teacher.
- All parents coming on campus for any reason must show ID and sign-in with office staff.
- We will not transfer calls to teachers during instructional time. We can take a message, email teachers, and you can expect a call back after school hours.
- Conferences must be scheduled an advance.
- If you have a change in the way your child goes home, the change needs to come in writing and delivered to the teacher first thing in the morning.
- **If there is AN EMERGENCY and you need to call to change how your child goes home, you must call the office prior to 1:00 PM to ensure that we can get the message to the teacher.**
- If you drop something off for your child (forms, money, etc.), we will email the teacher to notify the student to minimize instructional interruptions.

Student Arrival and Dismissal Policy

The safety of your child is our top priority. Student drop off and pick up is PROHIBITED in the parking lots and the bus loop in all circumstances. This will be strictly enforced. You must use the car loop for parent drop off and pick up. Morning supervision begins at 7:05. You may not drop your child off prior to that time. If you would like to walk your child to the front office for drop off, you must park in one of the parking spaces on Cherry Street and walk your child all the way up to the front office gate. You must show ID and sign in with office staff to proceed on campus and walking students to class is not allowed without prior approval after "Independence Day" in the fall.

The parking lots on the Harris Avenue side of the school are reserved for faculty and staff only unless we are holding an evening event. During dismissal, the red benches in the front of the school are reserved for Kindergarten "walkers" and their parents who are meeting them to walk home. Any other parents of "walkers" are welcome to wait at the crossing guard corners or at the "walker gate" where the bike rack is located. This is

the gate the children walk out of, please ask if you have any questions. Your compliance with this policy is critical to ensure the safety of your child.

Checking Out Students

Students will be called once a parent arrives. We cannot call a child out of class prior to that time. Please understand that it will take time for students to get to the office depending on your arrival time and their location at that time, so please allow for plenty of time when checking out. **You must arrive by 1:00 PM to check your child out of school** as to not interrupt the buses and regular dismissal procedures of the other students.

Bus Stops

The Bay District School Board provides buses and drivers for the transportation of students. Bus stops and routes are set by the School Board Transportation Department and not by the bus drivers or the school. Students must board and exit the bus at their designated stop according to the student address in FOCUS. Students must ride their assigned bus at all times without exception. Please discuss the following with your child:

1. Arrive to the bus stop five minutes before the bus time.
2. Stand off the side of the roadway while awaiting the bus.
3. Obey instructions of the bus driver at all times.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the transportation of your child, please feel free to call the school at 767-1480 or transportation at 767-4494.

Bus Behavior: According to the Bay District Discipline Matrix:

Bus Rules

1. Follow directions at all times.
2. Sit in your seat with both feet on the floor.
3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
4. Speak in a quiet, respectful voice.
5. No swearing, pushing, eating, teasing, or fighting on the bus.

Bus Discipline

Level One Offenses: 1 day bus suspension

Level Two Offenses: 1st Offense-3 day bus suspension, 2nd Offense-5 day bus suspension, 3rd 10 day bus suspension, 4th Offense-Bus suspension for the remainder of the year.

Level Three Offenses: Automatic bus suspension for remainder of year.

Car Riders and Walkers

Students who ride with their parents are expected to report to school no earlier than 7:05 each morning and go directly to the cafeteria for breakfast or to their designated holding area. Students are expected to leave campus when they are dismissed.

Walkers/bike riders must walk off campus immediately upon dismissal. If you do not trust your child to walk home alone, they must be listed as a “car rider” or “bus rider.” Bikes may be ridden off campus and walked on campus to be locked (with student lock) on the bike rack. M. Cherry Street is not responsible for any bicycles on campus, with or without locks. Skateboards, hoverboards, ripsticks, longboards, etc. are not allowed to be ridden on campus. Shoes with wheels are not allowed on campus.

School Visitation Policy

We welcome parents and visitors on our campus! In order to promote campus safety, all visitors and parents are required to report to the front office to present ID and receive a visitor’s badge prior to reporting to any location on campus. You must have one of the following forms of ID to be scanned through the RAPTOR system in the office:

1. A state-issued driver’s license or ID card (all 50 states)
2. A US Military ID card
3. A consular ID card issued by the government of Mexico
4. A US Permanent Resident card.

Any other form of ID, including passports, must be screened by the District’s Safety and Security Office. An appointment should be made with Mike Jones’s office at 767-4127. The Safety and Security Office will issue a letter to present to the school upon arrival.

Pets

No pets are permitted on campus unless they are certified service animals.

Illness of Students at School

It is extremely important that we have a phone number where you can be reached in case of illness of your child. Please log on to Parent Portal if/when you need to update emergency information. We appreciate having the name of a neighbor or family member who can pick up your child when you cannot. **As names and numbers change, please keep this information up-to-date. The website for Parent Portal can be found at www.bay.k12.fl.us**

Medication

Medication, including over-the-counter medications, may not be on campus or administered to a student without a completed "Permission to Administer Medication" form. This form must be completed by the parent and the doctor. You may obtain this form from the front office. For safety reasons, no medications are allowed on the bus.

School Food Services

Breakfast and lunch are served daily in the cafeteria. **All students will receive free breakfast and lunch during the 2016-2017 school year.** Breakfast is served 7:05-7:30 each morning and lunch is served 10:30-1:08. Please ask your child's teacher or the front office for your child's lunch time.

Guidance

The school guidance counselor is available to answer questions about the programs at the school, review your child's progress, interpret standardized test scores, discuss special programs, or meet with you about other concerns regarding your child. Parent-teacher conferences can also be arranged through the guidance office. You can reach Carol Leigh McGuffin, our guidance counselor, at 767-1483.

Textbooks and Media/Technology Material

Textbooks, library books, and other school materials are loaned to students by the Bay District School Board. If these articles are lost or damaged, students will be required to pay for them.

Care of School and Personal Property

Students must not mark on school furniture, walls, ceilings, floors, or equipment with pens, pencils, markers, or any other instruments. Students must not tamper with fire alarms, fire extinguishers, plants, trees, or any electrical system in the school. Anyone who willingly destroys school property through vandalism, arson, or larceny, or who creates a hazard to the safety of our students will be referred to the proper law enforcement agency.

Students are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money, radios, iPods, tablets, cell phones, cameras, or other valuable items to school. The school is not liable for damage to electronics. If a student wears glasses or watches, we ask that the student take responsibility for the care of them. If it is necessary to bring more money than needed at lunchtime, students should leave it with the teacher for safekeeping. Students should not leave money or other valuables in a desk. We are not responsible for any damaged or lost items.

Religious Expression Bill (SB 436)

Students in Florida's public schools cannot be punished for including religious materials in their coursework, and that they may pray at school during non-course time. It further states that school employees also may participate voluntarily in religious activities that are initiated by students before or after the school day.

Field Trips

Field trips may be arranged by the teacher. In order for children to participate, permission slips, **including a notarized medical authorization form**, must be completed and returned to the child's teacher by the deadline on the form. **Any students who had been issued a discipline referral (major or minor) may be excluded from field trips for safety reasons.** Chaperones must have an approved application on file. For any field trip in which chaperones will drive or be otherwise responsible for students, a background check and fingerprinting must be on file with the Bay District School Safety and Security Office. **No money will be refunded for school field trips should the child not be able to attend.**

PTO

The Parent Teacher Organization plays an important role in the life of Cherry Street. Our fund raising projects bring together parents, students, teachers, and community supporters, for fun and fellowship. The money that is raised by the PTO goes right back into the school.

School Volunteers

Volunteering contributes to the quality education of our students and is also a rewarding experience! If you would like to volunteer at our school, please complete and submit a volunteer application for a background check to the front office. A new application must be completed each school year.

BDS Academic Grading Scale

Your child's grades are available for your review at any time on the Bay District Parent Portal System by registering and logging in at www.bay.k12.fl.us

A	90-100 Outstanding Progress	
B	80-89 Above Average Progress	S Satisfactory
C	70-79 Average Progress	N Needs Improvement
D	60-69 Lowest Acceptable Progress	U Unsatisfactory
F	0-59 Failing	

Individual Grading Plans for each grade level that adhere to the BDS APP (Assessment Principles and Practices) Policy will be provided by your child's teachers. This policy is also available on the BDS Website www.bay.k12.fl.us.

Elementary Student Uniform Policy

STUDENT UNIFORM AND GROOMING 7.209

Appropriate dress is the primary responsibility of the student and his/her parent or guardian. In order to promote safety, personal hygiene, academic well-being, and moral development, students shall be expected to comply with reasonable requirements relating to dress, grooming and personal appearance. Students are expected to come to school dressed appropriately with proper attention having been given to personal cleanliness, grooming, and neatness of dress. The following is the dress code for grades K-12 except students at Margaret K. Lewis, New Horizons Learning Center, and Tom P. Haney Technical Center. The dress code policy applies from the time the student arrives on campus until the end of the school day and at all school activities during the school day. Exceptions may be made by the principal for field trips or other special activities:

Tops:

1. Polo/golf shirt with collar and buttons or
2. Collared dress shirt with sleeves (no cap sleeves) (underarm must be covered) or
3. Turtlenecks, or in grades K-5 T-shirts - all tops must be unaltered
4. School approved T-shirts (club, spirit, etc.) - unaltered
 - Maximum of 3 color (red, royal blue, and white)
 - Club and activity shirts not in school colors must be a nationally recognized school sponsored organization, i.e. Key Club, National Honor Society, etc.
 - Must be a solid school color except for school approved shirts
 - Small manufacturer's trade mark is acceptable
 - Must be appropriately fitted
 - Students may layer their tops; however, all visible tops must be in the designated colors. Tops worn as undergarments must be in designated school colors.

Bottoms:

- Belts must be worn if the pants have belt loops
- Belts must be traditional and must be worn in loops and pants shall be unaltered

- Bottoms can be khaki, navy blue or blue jeans. With site-based administrative approval bottoms can be black. Bottoms must be appropriately fitted and seated at the waist. Large pocket style shorts may be worn. No hip huggers, no holes, and no overalls (6-12 only)

- No large pocket style pants, no bell bottoms, no baggy pants, no hip huggers, no holes, no carpenter pants and no overalls (6-12 only) • No shorts, skirts or dresses shorter than five inches (5") above the knee caps as measured standing up, (K-5 students may wear jumpers)

- Dresses with sleeves (underarm must be covered) must be one of the school's chosen colors and a solid color

- Small manufacturer's trade mark and minimal embellishments are acceptable

Shoes:

- Closed toes and closed backs

- Sandals with back or back strap for grades K-5 only

- No bedroom shoes

Sweaters/Sweatshirts/Hoodies:

- Sweaters if school approved Long-sleeved sweatshirts/hoodies must be one of the 3 approved colors (school logo not required)

- Must be solid color (unless school approved spirit or club)

- Must be appropriately fitted Note: School approved means clothing carries school logo and is in school colors.

Other:

- Scarves must be worn appropriately around the neck or shoulders (accessory item only; no bandanas)

- No head wear except sunglasses. Hats or other sun-protective wear to only be worn while students are outdoors during school hours (not during class changes); however, at all other times, the sun-protective items must be properly stored by the student in pockets, purse, locker or backpack

- No jewelry or accessory that may be used as weapons such as chains or spiked jewelry

- Jackets/Coats must have buttons, zippers or snaps that are from top to bottom. Jackets can be any color. Jackets may be worn in the classroom at the discretion of the teacher.

- Students participating in extracurricular activities shall conform to the standards of this policy while attending classes during the regular school day. Cheerleaders may wear their uniforms when required for participation in school sanctioned activities. Athletes may wear the team jerseys on game days with appropriate uniform bottoms.

- No bedroom clothes.

Exceptions to wearing the uniform are permitted when:

- A student wears a uniform of a nationally recognized youth organization, such as the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, on regular meeting days;

- A student wears a costume, special clothing or dress attire necessary for participation in a school-sponsored or extracurricular activity provided the clothing complies with District policy.

- The wearing of a uniform violates a student's sincerely held religious belief. Students enrolled in special programs such as on-the-job vocational training, or participating in school activities which require additional standards of dress or grooming shall comply with such additional standards. When applicable, students shall be required to "dress out" and wear physical education uniforms prescribed by the school.

- Students whose school zone was changed by the school board will be allowed to wear the previous school's color as well as the present school's colors for the current school year.

Discipline for violating this policy shall be as follows:

- First and second offense consequences are: notification of parent or guardian; change of inappropriate attire;

- Consequences for subsequent offenses may include one or more of the following at the discretion of the principal: A. notification of parent or guardian; B. change of inappropriate attire; C. one to three days of in-school or out-of-school suspension; or D. three days after school detention, if available.

- The fourth and subsequent offenses are willful disobedience which will result in further disciplinary action, which may include out of school suspension or expulsion.

Student Discipline

Merriam Cherry Street Elementary School is a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) School, which assists schools in increasing academic performance, increasing safety, decreasing problem behaviors, and establishing positive school cultures. Individual PBIS plans are developed by each teacher at MCS to ensure consistent rules, structure, routines, procedures, boundaries, and firm consequences are utilized across our campus. We have PBIS events each month and at the end of each grading period in addition to other incentives for positive behavior.

It is the policy of the School Board that there shall be zero tolerance of misbehavior of all kinds. Merriam Cherry Street utilizes the BDS Discipline Matrix in decision-making regarding student discipline. Students and their parents or guardians will be financially responsible for any damage to school property. **Remember, our ultimate goal is the best learning environment possible for all students.**

Bullying

Expectations of Bay District School Board in regard to bullying (Policy 7.207):

It is the policy of the School Board of Bay County, Florida (the “District” or “School Board”) that all of its students and school employees have an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment, bullying, and dating violence and abuse of any kind. The District will not tolerate bullying, harassment, or teen dating violence and abuse of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying, harassment, or teen dating violence and abuse as defined herein, is prohibited, including discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex and disability.

Details of the policy can be found at www.bay.k12.fl.us

Student Participation in the Pledge of Allegiance

Each student shall be informed by a written notice published in the student handbook or a similar publication pursuant to s. 1006.07(2) the Florida HB 7029, signed into Law by Governor Rick Scott on April 14, 2016, amended Florida Statute 1003.44 by spelling out requirements. In accordance with the law, upon written request from the student's parent/guardian, Bay District students may be excused from participation in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Updated provisions, effective July 1, 2016, from the FL Statute 1003.44 include: When the national anthem is played, students and all civilians shall stand at attention, men removing head coverings except those worn for religious purposes.

Upon written request by his or her parent, the student must be excused from reciting the pledge, including standing and placing the right hand over his or her heart.

When the pledge is given, non-exempt students must show full respect to the flag by standing at attention, men removing any headdress, except when such headdress is worn for religious purposes.

The Pledge of Allegiance is defined:

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

The Pledge of Allegiance shall be rendered by students standing with the right hand over the heart. The Pledge of Allegiance shall be recited at the beginning of the day in each public elementary, middle, and high school in the state.

****If you would like your student to be exempt, please contact your child's school directly. The school will advise you how to proceed with your written request.**

Request to Transfer

If an academic need arises and a parent desires to request a transfer for his/her child from one teacher to another, the following process will be used:

1. Parent initiated the request for a teacher transfer using the FOCUS form online.
2. The principal schedules a parent-teacher conference (required attendance by the parent and teachers and facilitated by the principal) to discuss the parent's concerns.
3. The principal renders a decision on the transfer request within two weeks of the form being received.

The Bay County School Board policies are subject to change at the discretion of the School Board. The complete School Board policies are available at each school, at the District's website www.bay.k12.fl.us , and at the Superintendent's office at 1311 Balboa Avenue.