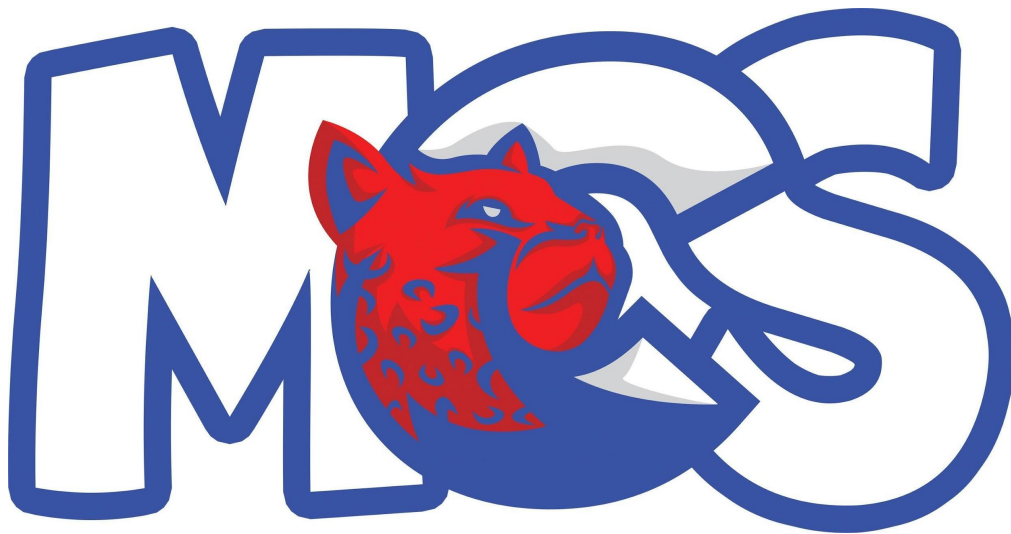


# **Merriam Cherry Street Elementary**

## **Student Handbook**

2022-2023



**Bryan Long, Principal**

**Michele Thompson, Assistant Administrator**

**Pam Stark, Assistant Administrator**

## Contact Information

Merriam Cherry Street Elementary

1125 Cherry Street, Panama City, FL 32405

Office: 850-767-1480

Fax: 850-747-5499

Twitter: @mcherryst

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

Morning Supervision Begins: 7:05

Morning Bell: 7:25

Tardy Bell: 7:30

Dismissal Time: 2:15

## Merriam Cherry Street PRIDE 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.

## 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.** 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 in advance. Parents may choose to attend in person, virtually via Google Meets, or via telephone.
- 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 1:30pm 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 walkers will be picked up or released at the gate located on Harris Ave. just before the car rider area. Parents of walkers are welcome to pick up their walkers from this area. 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 1:30pm 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. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
4. Be polite and respectful to everyone.
5. 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 Discipline Codes:

BUS DISCIPLINE CODES				
School bus drivers will provide an initial warning to all students. Upon reoccurrence, the bus driver will contact individual parents to inform them of the problem behavior(s) and seek support. Subsequent bus infractions will result in a referral.				
<b>Minor Bus Infractions</b>	-Eating/Drinking on bus -Failure to wear seat belt -Loading or unloading on unassigned bus or bus stop -Not in assigned seat -Out of seat without permission while bus is in motion -Talking while lights are on at railroad crossing	N	LOCAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parent notification, Loss of Privileges</li> <li>2. Parent conference, 1-3 days detention/I.S.S.</li> <li>3. 3-5 days Detention/I.S.S. and/or Bus Meeting</li> </ol>
<b>Major Bus Infractions</b>	-Putting belongings or any part of the body outside of the bus window while the bus is in motion -Throwing objects in/out of the bus.	N	LOCAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Loss of Privileges and/or 1-3 days Detention/I.S.S./Bus Suspension</li> <li>2. Bus Meeting and/or 3-5 days Bus Suspension/I.S.S. OR 3-5 days O.S.S.</li> <li>3. Bus Meeting and/or 5-10 days Bus Suspension/I.S.S. OR 3-5 days O.S.S.</li> </ol> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin-top: 5px;">*If a student violates the Bus Suspension assigned, administration may convert the Bus Suspension to days of I.S.S.</p>

## 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. **We ask that you stay in your vehicle during drop off and pick up. MCS staff will help your student exit and enter the vehicles. 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.

## Cell Phones



**Cell Phones - SEE IT, HEAR IT, USE IT = DISCIPLINE REFERRAL.** Students may possess cell phones on school property and at school functions but the cell phone(s) must be off (including vibrate) and not be visible during school hours. Students may not use such devices on school property during regular school hours, including lunch.

Students may use their devices before and after school hours. **Any student who chooses to bring a cellular telephone to school shall do so at his or her own risk.** Cell phones must be stored in purses, backpacks or allowed to be collected and held by teachers until the end of the day. School personnel shall not be responsible for damage, loss or theft of a student's cellular telephone while on school property. Cell phones misused in accordance with this policy shall be confiscated from the student and turned into Administration. Any student that videos an altercation is subject to discipline. This is in adherence to school board policy 7.211. **Disciplinary actions for violating cell phone policy will be determined using the Bay District Schools disciplinary matrix.**

## 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](http://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 2021-2022 school year.** Breakfast is served

7:05-7:30 each morning and lunch is served 10:25-1:00. 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 Kathy Smiley, our guidance counselor, at 767-1492.

## Textbooks and Media/Technology Material

Textbooks, library books, Chromebooks, 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. 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, nor can they be prohibited from praying at school during non-course time. SB 436 further states that school employees may also 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 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](http://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](http://www.bay.k12.fl.us).

## BDS Non-Discrimination Statement

### **Current Board Policy 2.111**

No person shall on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, pregnancy, or marital status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to harassment or discrimination under, any educational program or activity or work environment. This practice shall apply equally to students, employees, applicants for employment and all persons having business with the School Board. The District also provides equal access to its facilities to the Boy Scouts and other patriotic youth groups, as required by the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act.

## 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 recognitions 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.**

Details of BDS School Board Policy on Discipline can be found at [www.bay.k12.fl.us](http://www.bay.k12.fl.us)

## 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](http://www.bay.k12.fl.us)

## Fortify Florida

FortifyFL is a suspicious activity reporting tool that allows you to instantly relay information to appropriate law enforcement agencies and school officials. FortifyFL was created and funded by the 2018 Florida Legislature as part of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act. The application was named by students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. The Office of Attorney General, Department of Education and Florida Department of Law Enforcement coordinated its development and roll-out. The app is available in the Apple Store and on Google Play. Please visit <http://www.getfortifyfl.com> for any additional information.

## Students Accounting For Everyone.

The purpose of the S.A.F.E website is to provide an anonymous platform for reporting possible incidents of bullying/harassment or Teen Dating Violence and Abuse. Please visit [SAFE](#) to submit a new anonymous report or to review or add a message to an existing report.

## 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.**

## Moment of Silence Participation

**House Bill 529, Sec.1003.45(4), FLA.STAT.**

Principals of each public school shall require teachers in first-period classrooms in all grades to set aside at least one minute but not more than two minutes daily for the moment of silence. Teachers may not make suggestions as to the nature of any reflection that a student may engage in during the moment of silence. Each first-period classroom teacher shall encourage parents and guardians to discuss the moment of silence with their children and to make suggestions as to the best use of this time. A student may not interfere with another student’s participation.

## 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](http://www.bay.k12.fl.us) , and at the Superintendent's office at 1311 Balboa Avenue.***

***Policies, procedures and information outlined in the Student Handbook may be subject to change at the Principal's discretion based upon updates and requirements dictated by federal, state, and local officials during the Pandemic.***

# PRIDE EXPECTATIONS ON AND AROUND CAMPUS

	Everywhere and all the time	Arrival	Walkways, Class Lines & Class Transitions	Cafeteria	Restrooms	Recess	Special Area	Dismissal
<b>P: Prepared</b>	I am ready to learn.	I follow the Cheetah Paws to my assigned morning area.	I stay with my class and follow the line leader.	I stay with my class and follow the line leader.	I have permission from my Teacher.	I stay with my class and follow the line leader.	I stay with my class and follow the line leader.	I stay with my class and follow the line leader.
<b>R: Respectful</b>	I am polite, kind and use respectful language.	I am polite, kind, use respectful language and have walking feet.	I am silent, smiling with walking feet.	I use a quiet voice and am polite, kind and use respectful language.	I am polite, kind, use respectful language and respect <u>other</u> people's privacy.	I am polite, kind, use respectful language and share with others.	I am polite, kind, use respectful language and respect the property of my special area teachers.	I am polite, kind, use respectful language to all and have walking feet.
<b>I: Independent</b>	I keep my hands, feet and objects to myself.	I keep my hands at my side, feet on the ground and objects to myself.	I keep my hands at my side, feet on the ground and objects to myself.	I keep my hands to myself, feet on the ground and objects to myself.	I keep my hands at my side, feet on the ground and objects to myself.	I keep my hands to myself, feet on the ground and objects to myself.	I keep my hands to myself, feet on the ground and objects to myself.	I keep my hands at my side, feet on the ground and objects to myself.

<b>D: Dependable</b>	I listen and follow directions.	I listen and follow directions from adults.	I listen and follow teacher directions.	I sit in my assigned area and listen and follow directions from adults.	I will flush, wash and leave quietly.	I will use equipment properly and listen and follow directions from adults.	I listen and follow directions from my special area teachers.	I listen and follow directions from adults.
<b>E: Engaged</b>	I work hard on the task at hand.	I am focused on getting to my arrival area safely.	I stay on the Cheetah Paws on the right in a straight line.	I clean up after myself and will have permission to be out of my seat.	I clean up after myself and take pride in my school.	I will invite others to play and clean up after myself.	I work hard on the task at hand and have fun.	I am focused on getting home safely.