

## Merritt Brown Student Handbook



Principal: Dr. GeLonda Martin

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Assistant Principal: Kenneth Monette

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Assistant Administrator: Melissa Privett, Ed. S

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### **Merritt Brown Contact Information**

5044 Merritt Brown Way, Panama City, FL, 32404

Main Office 767-3976

Registrar 767-3981

**Fax Line** 767-4008

**MBMS Website** <http://www.bayschools.com/bms>

**Parent Portal** <https://focus.bayschools.net/focus/>

Greetings,

As one of Merritt's leaders, I believe that positivity is the fertilizer that encourages others to blossom. It is the seed that when sewn, produces a harvest of success. With it, our students are bound to flourish, inspire, and achieve what some may consider to be the impossible. Each day, as a school family, we will strive to plant seeds of positivity in our community and teach our students to overcome the obstacles that they encounter.

At Merritt Brown, we understand the importance of building character in our youth and present this understanding in our school's vision that all Merritt Brown Bears will exemplify character both within our walls and out through the service that they provide to others. Character is taught through our character education program and rewarded through Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support. Merritt Brown students are afforded the opportunity to work together in service to school and community and to develop moral character through our Builder's Club, National Junior Honor Society, and 850 We Will Regrow program. Additionally, our school-based Bear Television provides service and engagement to Bears within walls. Merritt Brown students service community areas to include downtown Panama City, the District Office, and the state capitol through their colorful and creative artwork displays.

A student's teacher is a teacher not only for a school year, but for an entire lifetime. We are excited about learning and are thankful for the opportunity to engage our students in a nurturing, family-oriented environment in which students can learn, be of service, and be successful in the years to come.

Thank you for your support,

Dr. GeLonda Martin

### **Merritt Brown School Vision**

Merritt Brown Middle School will be a compassionate community in which the character of each individual is exemplified through service.

### **Merritt Brown School Mission**

Merritt Brown Middle School (MBMS) creates a safe and nurturing environment that inspires student achievement. Our faculty and staff are dedicated to developing well-rounded scholars, life-long learners, and successful leaders of the future through practice and rigorous standards-based curricula.

### **Merritt Brown School-Wide Expectations (B.E.A.R.S.)**

- **B** - Be Responsible
- **E** - Engage in Learning
- **A** - Act Safely
- **R** - Respect Yourself and Others
- **S** - Show a Positive Attitude

### **Parent Portal**

Parent Portal is a complete online system which allows parents access to their student's information including, but not limited to, students schedules, grades, discipline, and attendance. School registration and yearly updates are online and will be done through Parent Portal. If further assistance is needed, please contact Ms. Barron, our registrar @ 767-3976.

### **Grade Scale**

A	90-100	Outstanding Progress
B	80-89	Above-Average Progress
C	70-79	Average Progress
D	60-69	Lowest Acceptable Progress
F	0-59	and Below Failure

### **Student Arrival and Departure**

Classes begin at 9:00 AM and conclude at 3:30 PM daily unless notified otherwise. It is requested that parents do not leave students at school prior to 8:25 AM (30 minutes prior to the first transition bell). Students should be picked up by 4:00 PM (within 30 minutes of the last bell).

Please do not check out students after 3:15 PM.

Students should be picked up within 30 minutes of extracurricular activities.

## A/B Weekly Rotating Schedule

8:55 Welcome  
9:00-9:45 Critical Thinking  
9:49-10:34 First Session  
10:38-11:23 Second Session  
11:27-1:01 Third Session  
1:05-1:50 Fourth Session  
1:54-2:39 Fifth Session  
2:43-3:30 Sixth Session

## School Advisory Council (SAC)

The SAC is responsible for assisting in the formulation and implementation of the school improvement plan, acting as an advisor to the principal, assisting in the development of the educational program, providing input to the school's school improvement budget, and acting as a liaison between the school and community. It functions to unite school staff, parents and local community/business members in an effort to improve the quality of education provided to the students of Merritt Brown Middle School. All parents/guardians and community members are invited to participate on the School Advisory Council. The advisory council meets at least four times during the normal school year and makes recommendations and decisions regarding the management of the school. It is a vital part of our efforts to keep in constant touch with our parents and community in order to provide the best possible education and services for our students. If you are interested in attending and/or serving please contact the school at 767-3976.

## Bus Passes Emergencies Only



An official MBMS bus pass is only issued for emergencies. To receive a bus pass a student must bring a written permission note from the student's parent or guardian **to the front office before school starts**. Make sure to include the student's name, the bus number of the bus the student is to ride, and a telephone number of a parent or guardian for follow-up and verification.

**Requests for bus passes will not be approved  
at the end of the day or by phone.**

## **Supply List for School Year 2022 - 2023**

### ***Students:***

Notebook paper  
One inch binders  
Prong folders  
Highlighters  
Expo markers  
Cap erasers

### ***Classroom:***

Kleenex  
Paper towels  
Hand Soap  
Hand Sanitizer  
Ziploc bags for science

### ***Physical Education Class Clothing/Supplies:***

Students in PE are required to dress in exercise clothes and suitable shoes for students safety. Students who are not dressed for safe participation will not be allowed to participate.

- Plain white shirt (no sleeveless, no V-neck)
- Athletic Shorts (no shorter than 5 inches above the knee)
- No yoga pants or biker shorts
- Lock for PE locker (may bring your own or purchase through gym class)

## **The Student Code of Conduct**

The purpose of The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is to provide information about the Bay County School Board's policies regarding student conduct and discipline. Outlined in this brochure are students' responsibilities and rights; attendance policies; informal and formal discipline procedures; and other pertinent information. The Bay County School Board policies are subject to change at the discretion of the School Board. The complete School Board policies that form the Code of Student Conduct and contain other information relevant to students are available at each school, at the District's web site [www.bay.k12.fl.us](http://www.bay.k12.fl.us), and at the Superintendent's office on Balboa Avenue. Each school's student handbook includes references to the School Board policies and other more specific rules.


### ***Cell Phones -***

- Any student who chooses to bring a cellular telephone to school shall do so at his or her own risk. School personnel shall not be responsible for damage, loss, or theft of a student's cellular telephone while on school property.
- Cell phones must be stored in purses or backpacks. Cell phones

misused in accordance with School Board policy shall be confiscated from the student.

- Taking a video of an altercation is subject to discipline. Disciplinary actions for violating cell phone policy will be determined using the BDS disciplinary matrix.

### ***Items Not Allowed***

 The possession, use, distribution, or sale of tobacco, tobacco products, drugs, or weapons on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, or on school transportation is strictly prohibited and will result in the involvement of the School Resource Deputy. Consequences will be administered in accordance with the Bay District Schools Discipline Matrix and School Board Policy.

### **The following items should not be brought to campus:**

- Radios, iPods, electronic games, electronic devices, speakers – or other noise makers
- Laser pointers
- Toys, fidget spinners
- Large sums of money
- Rubber bands or glitter
- Cigarette paper (rolling paper)
- Aerosol/pump spray perfumes, colognes, hairspray or deodorant
- Lighters
- Electronic cigarettes “e-cigs”
- Mardi Gras beads
- Valuable personal items
- “White out” or permanent markers (Sharpies), or gel pens
- Unsealed containers  
Drinks/containers must be factory sealed and can only be opened and consumed in the cafeteria.
- Glass containers
- Balloons
- Footballs, basketballs, or skateboards
- Gel Pens
- Permanent Markers, Including Sharpies
- Calculators, Protractors, or a compass
- White-out of any kind (fluid or tape)
- Aerosol/pump spray, perfumes, colognes and hairspray
- Toys, laser pointers, trading cards, fidget spinners and cameras
- Sharp objects (ex. scissors, ninja stars, shanks, knives, hat hooks)

School personnel shall not be responsible for damage, loss, or theft of a student’s personal items while on school property.

**Any items not specifically listed are at the discretion of school administration.**

## **Emergency Drills**

Emergency drills (fire, tornado, etc.) will be held several times during the school year. When the fire alarm sounds, students must line up quickly and quietly. Exit the building by the pre-planned route from the classroom. If a student is not with his class when the fire alarm sounds, leave the building by the nearest exit. When the tornado alarm sounds, students should go quickly and quietly to their designated areas, sit with their face to the wall, and cover their head. If a student is not with his class when the tornado alarm sounds, enter the nearest building, get away from doors and windows, sit facing the wall, and cover your face. All students remain in that position until an announcement is made to return to normal operations.

## **Extra Curricular Activities Criteria**

- Has not received in-school suspension
- Has not received out-of-school suspension
- Has no more than two discipline referrals
- Has not received bus suspension
- Has 3 or less unexcused absences
- Is passing (at least a 60) in all subject areas

Please note that Merritt Brown dances are for Merritt Brown students only.

## **Public Display of Affection** **(PDA)**

Public displays of affection such as hugging, kissing, holding hands or putting arms around each other are not allowed and may result in disciplinary actions.

## Meal Policies

- The cost of meals for the 2022-2023 year:

<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Lunch</u>
Reduced— .30	.40
Paying— \$1.50	\$2.75

*Parents and employees will pay \$2.00 for breakfast and \$3.50 lunch.*

- **Students are NOT permitted to charge school meals.** If a student does not have meal money, they will be provided an alternative meal (sandwich, white milk and fruit).
- **Check Payment Policy:** The Food Service Department will accept checks for meal payment. However, if an individual has written two (2) checks that are returned for insufficient funds, no additional checks will be accepted for payment. Returned checks are charged \$15.00 each processing fee. Subsequent payment must be cash, cashier's check or money order. Students may prepay for breakfast and/or lunch by the week. **The check or cash must be taken to the cafeteria before the first bell.**
- **My Lunch Money - Paying for meals on the Internet:** Food Service has implemented a new internet website to assist parents in paying for meals with a credit card. It is [www.SchoolPaymentSolutions.com](http://www.SchoolPaymentSolutions.com) (SPS). There is a \$2.50 charge to use your credit card; however, when you enroll there is NO CHARGE to monitor the account to make sure your child doesn't run out of money. This new website also allows you to see just what your child is purchasing with this money. To enroll at the website, you will need your child's 10-digit school identification number. You can get it from your school or from the Food Service at 767-4281. For additional questions, their toll free number is: 866-334-7284 or you may call Food Service at 767-4281.



## **Merritt Brown Student Chromebook Contract**

Per the Bay District Chromebook contract that guardians sign, Merritt Brown Middle School is deemed to have retained title to the Chromebook at all times. The Student shall hold no security or ownership of the Chromebook. The Chromebook is on loan to the students for educational purposes only for the academic year. Moreover, the District's administrative staff and faculty retain the right to collect and/or inspect the Chromebook at any time, including via electronic remote access and to alter, add or delete installed software or hardware. The School may require the Student to return the Equipment at any time and for any reason.

The Student assumes all risks of loss of the Chromebook and agrees to return it to the School in the condition received from the School, with the exception of normal wear and tear. If the Equipment is damaged or lost due to negligence, the School shall have the option of requiring the Student to repair the Chromebook to a state of good working order or to reimburse the School for the replacement cost. The cost of a replacement Chromebook is approximately \$299.00. Students are also responsible for lost chargers and broken cases.

Using functions on electronic devices that disrupt the educational environment, from within or from outside the classroom, or violates the rights of others, including, but not limited to using the device to cheat, violate school conduct rules, harass or bully staff or students or use their device for unlawful purposes will be subject to disciplinary action; up to and including suspension, expulsion, and being reported to local authorities. Using any device that permits recording voice or image of another in any way that disrupts the educational environment, invades privacy of others, or is made without prior consent of individuals being recorded is prohibited.

The use of a Chromebook must be in support of education in line with the educational goals and policies of Bay District Schools. The use of Chromebooks is not a right, but a privilege, and inappropriate use will result in loss of that privilege. School and district administrators will decide what is appropriate use and their decision is final. Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, or hardware, or software.

### General Chromebook Guidelines

1. Chromebooks are to be charged and ready for class everyday.
2. Students are not to alter settings or security items.
3. Students are to only touch their own Chromebooks.
4. Students are not to log into other student Chromebooks for any reason.
5. Cases always have to be on Chromebooks, they can not be removed.
6. Students are to only be on Chromebooks when teachers allow them.
7. When Chromebooks are used in class, they are to only be used for the assigned topic or assignment. Students are not to be on music, games, or videos, unless they are part of the lesson.
8. Students are not to walk around the hallways with Chromebooks open.
9. Do not carry or pick up Chromebooks by the screen.
10. Students are to be aware that **all** activity on the Chromebooks is being monitored. Going to inappropriate sites or using the device to harm others will result in disciplinary actions.
11. Students are to only be on the school wifi while on campus.
12. Administration is allowed to alter the Chromebook guidelines at any time.

Student signature:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*By signing this contract, I am noting that I am aware of the Chromebook guidelines of Merritt Brown Middle School.** The intent of this contract is to ensure that the student accepts responsibility for the privilege and use of the Chromebook. Administration reserves the right to limit, suspend, or revoke a student's use of the Chromebook if we determine that the student's use is not aligned to the educational process and/or goals of Merritt Brown Middle School.

## Safety



**It's your school. It's your choice.**

**FLORIDA STATUE 232.256** AUTHORIZES SCHOOL OFFICIALS TO SEARCH STUDENT LOCKERS OR OTHER STORAGE AREAS FOR ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF SUBSTANCES OR OBJECTS.

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The [SAFE Anonymous Reporting Tool](#) allows anyone to submit a report to alert the school district of a possible incident of bullying, harassment, violence, or abuse.

Link to report: <https://webapps.bayschools.net/Safe/>

Link to video for how to use SAFE: <https://vimeo.com/329874931>

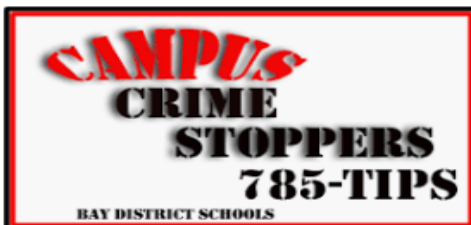
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[FortifyFL](#) is a reporting tool that allows you to instantly relay any safety concerns to appropriate law enforcement agencies and school officials. Please use this tool to report any suspicious activity, bullying, or safety concerns.

Link: <https://getfortifyfl.com/>

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You may also report criminal activity by calling Campus Crime Stoppers at 850-785-TIPS

## **Merritt Brown Physical Education**

The goals and expectations for students in Physical Education at Merritt Brown are as follows:

1. Students will participate in the daily activities in order to master the national PE standards.
2. Students prepare for each day's activities by being safely and properly dressed. A solid white T-shirt, and athletic gym shorts can be worn in hot weather and sweatpants and sweatshirt in cold weather. Athletic shoes should be worn at all times during P.E. Students may not participate in an activity without proper attire for safety and hygienic reasons.
3. Students follow the directions of all coaches at all times to promote the safety of all students before, during and after each activity at P. E.
4. At the beginning of each nine weeks students receive 100 points. In order to maintain these points, students must dress out, participate and complete all assignments.
5. It is highly recommended that each PE student brings a lock to use on their PE locker.

## **Merritt Brown Athletics**

Merritt Brown offers a varied athletic program for the middle school student to improve their physical skills, mental determination, self-discipline and sportsmanship. Participation and uniforms are free. Try-outs are usually about 3 weeks before the sports season. The tryout dates and details will be posted 2 weeks prior to the tryout.

At Merritt Brown, all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students are eligible to participate in the following sports:

### **BOYS**

Football (1st quarter)  
Soccer (2nd quarter)  
Basketball (3rd quarter)  
Track & Field (4th quarter)

### **GIRLS**

Volleyball (1st quarter)  
Basketball (2nd quarter)  
Soccer (3rd quarter)  
Track & Field (4th quarter)

In order to establish eligibility for the first 9 weeks of each school year, a student must be regularly promoted from the previous year, with either a minimum 2.0 grade point average from the previous year end of course grades or a minimum 2.0 grade point average for the 4th 9 weeks of the previous year. Exception: first time 6th graders are automatically eligible for the first nine weeks. After eligibility has been established, a student who fails more than one (1) subject, or has less than a 2.0 grade point average from a nine weeks grading period is ineligible for interscholastic or extracurricular activities for the next nine weeks grading period. Eligibility status can only be changed at the end of each nine weeks

period and is based on all grades first reported for those classes. Exception: A student who completes work due to an extended illness, supported by a physician's report, or other excused absence may have his/her eligibility status changed once all work is completed and course grade is changed. A student who experiences a change in eligibility status will become eligible or ineligible on the sixth school day of the new grading period. These rules apply to all extracurricular activities.

\*Age and student documentation can also affect eligibility. Please contact the school Athletic Director(s) for any further questions in regards to Eligibility.

All students participating in the athletic program for the current school year must have a physical examination from a doctor and complete all required paperwork. Athletic forms are available at the front office. No student will be allowed to participate in a tryout, practice or an athletic contest prior to receiving/completing the physical/required paperwork.

Coaches Lisa Boyce and Andrew Halford are the Athletic Directors. If there are any questions, email Coach Boyce at [boyceld@bay.k12.fl.us](mailto:boyceld@bay.k12.fl.us) or Coach Halford at [halfoaw1@bay.k12.fl.us](mailto:halfoaw1@bay.k12.fl.us)

### **Student Participation in the Pledge of Allegiance**

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 hair covering except those 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.
- Each student shall be informed by a written notice published in the student handbook or a similar publication pursuant to s. 1006.07(2) that the student has the right not to participate in reciting the pledge. Upon written request by his or her parents, 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.

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.

### **Computer and Technical Education (CTE)**

The CTE initiative at Merritt Brown Middle School is to increase interest in and create a pipeline of students in computer science, information technology, cybersecurity and other related fields. CTE partners with the Florida State University- Panama City ASCENT Program whose goal is to expand school programs and summer camps leading to industry certifications for middle and high school students.

#### ***Digital Information Technology: Python***

Python is a computer programming language often used to build websites and software, automate tasks, and conduct data analysis. Python is a general-purpose coding language, meaning it can be used to create a variety of different programs and isn't specialized for any specific problems.

This is a high school level course and middle schoolers earn high school credit. They will also have the opportunity to take the Python Coding Apprentice Certification. (PCA).

#### ***Information and Communication Technology***

ICT is intended to raise digital technology literacy and will prepare students with the skills needed to meet the challenges of an increasingly technical world. ICT Essentials courses span digital technologies associated with web development, multimedia, word processing, spreadsheet, database, Internet communications, cyber security, gaming, and computer programming.

This is a middle school level course. Students will be able to earn computer industry certifications.

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These Career Pathways are designed to prepare students to be successful in a rapidly changing workforce and equip them to make informed decisions about future college and career opportunities. CTE offers students opportunities to earn highly valued industry certifications and to develop a multitude of skills while experiencing rigorous curriculum with real world applications. CTE students who complete 3 courses in a Career Pathway are eligible for many scholarships, including the Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV) and Gold Seal

## Cape Scholars (GSC) Bright Future Scholarships.

The district's career and technical programs are open to all eligible students in the district and is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in employment and educational opportunity. No person shall be discriminated against or harassed in any educational program, services, or activities, or employment conditions or practices on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation.

Admission is open to students with limited English proficiency. In order to eliminate barriers, the district assesses each student's ability to participate and benefit through placement testing and counseling. Based on assessments, services or referrals are provided to help prepare students for successful participation.

*Questions, complaints, or requests for additional information regarding discrimination or harassment may be sent to Holly Buchanan, Executive Director/Equity Coordinator/ Human resources and Employee Support Services @ 850-767-4100 ([buchahd@bay.k12.fl.us](mailto:buchahd@bay.k12.fl.us))*