



2022-2023

# Handbook

for Students & Families

**NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE  
BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED**





**Welcome Back NMSBVI Students and Parents!**

We hope you are enjoying a wonderful summer. We also hope you are relaxed, recharged and ready to start a new school year. We are so delighted that you are part of our amazing learning community. We welcome and value your dedication to excellence in education, and we look forward to working with you and your children.

All signs point to another incredible and productive school year. Our skilled and devoted staff is already planning and preparing for your child. Our enthusiastic office team is registering new families, ordering needed materials and updating student files. Our hard working and conscientious custodians have spent the entire summer thoroughly cleaning the facility. We are indeed a joyous and caring community with the common goals of nurturing responsible, caring students and promoting high-level learning and independence.

Thank you to all who are helping prepare for the new school year. Your commitment to insuring that NMSBVI remains a celebrated and successful school is awe-inspiring. We eagerly look forward to greeting students and families again. It remains an honor and privilege to serve as your educational leaders. Please stop by and say hello or contact us at 575-439-4486, [maritzamorales@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us](mailto:maritzamorales@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us) (Maritza), 575-439-4492, [JackieFreeman@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us](mailto:JackieFreeman@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us) (Jackie), or 575-439-4433, [heathermiller@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us](mailto:heathermiller@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us) (Heather).

Together, we know we will make this school year one of growth and achievement for all children.

Warmest Regards,

Maritza Morales  
Jackie Freeman  
Heather Miller

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Dear Students, Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the 2022-2023 School Year in Alamogordo! NMSBVI will be open with full in-person learning for all students this school year. Of course, we will continue to follow the direction of the Governor's office, the New Mexico Department of Health, the New Mexico Public Education Department and the Center for Disease Control relating to the pandemic. Please know that we are continuing all cleaning protocols and safety protocols according to those agencies' recommendations and we continue to purchase all necessary products and protective equipment. The health and safety of our students, their families and our staff is of the utmost importance to NMSBVI.

Construction continues to be the theme for this school year. We have exciting new projects in the works for this year, with the construction of the new Garrett Dormitory, the upcoming demolition and reconstruction of the Superintendent's Residence, the resurfacing of parking lots and the addition of a new playground. We are very excited about these projects and are thankful to the state of New Mexico for helping us with these projects. We are also excited that we have been able to open our beautiful newly renovated natatorium.

This is my 6th year as the Superintendent and my 19<sup>th</sup> year at NMSBVI! I do split my time between Alamogordo and Albuquerque and live in the South Cottage when I am on campus. We are so grateful to have a beautiful campus, but it is most beautiful when the students are here!

This Student/ Family Handbook is provided for your information and guidance during the 2022--2023 school year. Please read this handbook carefully, as it provides you with a description of our educational practices as well as the policies and rules for a safe and orderly learning environment. Understanding these rules and following them will make your time with NMSBVI much more enjoyable.

Parents and guardians, in the back of the handbook you will find an acknowledgement form indicating that you have received and read the handbook. Please share this handbook with your child, then fill out the form, sign it and return it to the Education Department's Administrative Assistant. For more information, I encourage you to visit our website.

Thank you for entrusting your child to us for the upcoming school year. We commit ourselves to providing the best education we can for your child. We expect that when we develop a transition IEP to send your child back to you, you will have many areas of growth to celebrate with them. Please feel free to contact the school if you have any questions or require assistance in any way.

Respectfully,  
Patricia Beecher  
Superintendent

# **NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

1900 North White Sands Blvd.  
Alamogordo, New Mexico 88310  
(575) 437-3505

## **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

	<b><u>Work Extension</u></b>
<b>Superintendent</b> – Patricia Beecher	4413
<b>Administrative Assistant</b> – Kim Chavez	4419
<b>Outreach Coordinator</b> – Julie Johnson	4432
<b>Administrative Assistant</b> – Angela Harris	4431
<b>Director of Human Resources</b> – Veronica Hernandez	4468
<b>Director of Business &amp; Finance</b> – Sylvia Hartley	4474
<b>Director of Institutional Support</b> – Margie Macias	4488
<b>Coordinator of Early Childhood Program</b> – Paul Kilman	3061
<b>Coordinator of Family, Infant, and Toddler Program</b> – Julie Maner	(505) 859-0427

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

<b>Special Education Director</b> – Heather Miller	4433
<b>Principal</b> – Maritza Morales	4486
<b>Program Coordinator</b> – Jackie Freeman	4492
<b>Program Coordinator (Related Services)</b> – Randal Martin	4447
<b>Administrative Assistant</b> – Ashley Rabago	4458
<b>Transition Services Coordinator</b> – Holly Bird	4470
<b>Teacher</b> – Angelina King	4546
<b>Teacher</b> – Andrea Jewell	4522
<b>Teacher</b> – Danielle Holdridge	4521
<b>Teacher</b> – Donelle Bunch-Sydow	4529
<b>Teacher</b> – Jeff Killebrew	4530
<b>Teacher</b> – Nancy Wilmott	4525
<b>Teacher</b> – Jerri Young	4531
<b>Teacher</b> – Craig Cooper	4517
<b>Teacher</b> – Michele Joyner	4543
<b>Teacher</b> – Shan Hendrix	4501
<b>Teacher</b> – Virginia Stephenson	4512
<b>Teacher</b> - Kelly McMahan	4506
<b>Adaptive PE</b> – Alex Bocian	4539

## **STUDENT SERVICES (cont'd)**

### **Support Services**

<b>Behavior Support Specialist/Counselor</b> – Jackie Freeman	4492
<b>Library Assistant</b> – Amy Brody	4510
<b>Physical Therapist</b> – Randal Martin	4447
<b>Occupational Therapist</b> – Lori Adam	4410
<b>Orientation &amp; Mobility</b> – Kelly Carnes	4528
<b>Orientation &amp; Mobility/Inclusion</b> – Ron Later	4478
<b>Speech Therapist</b> – TBD	4526
<b>Transportation Supervisor</b> – Jeremiah Vaughn	4541

### **Residential Life/Recreation**

<b>Residential Life Supervisor</b> – Janet King	
<b>Dormitories:</b> Sacramento North Office Staff	437-3505 ext. 4577
Sacramento North Student Phone	TBD
Sacramento South Office Staff	437-3505 ext. 4575
Sacramento South Student Phone	TBD
Sacramento South Kitchen	437-3503 ext. 4573

### **Student Health Services**

<b>Health Services Supervisor</b> – Michelle Graves	4480
<b>Nurse</b> – Leslie Peterson	4457
<b>Nurse</b> – Veronica Miranda	4457
<b>Nurse</b> – Eva Gonzales	4457
<b>Nurse</b> - Brandi Chisolm	4457
<b>Nurse</b> - Richard Placencio	4457
<b>Substitute</b> – Joshua Landry	4457
<b>Substitute</b> – Jennifer Miller	4457
<b>Substitute</b> - Angela Middleton	4457

# **NMSBVI BOARD OF REGENTS**

**2022-2023**

## **President**

**Catherine Gray**  
13401 Pinnacle Court, NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87112

## **Vice President**

**Agnes Vallejos**  
P.O. Box 2574  
Los Lunas, NM 87031

## **Secretary**

**Gary Smethurst**  
7312 Santa Barbara East  
Albuquerque, NM 87109

## **Member**

**Robyn Holmes**  
1401 Crescent Drive  
Alamogordo, NM 88310

## **Member**

**Mary Willows**  
10501 Lagrima De Oro Road NE  
Apt. 245  
Albuquerque, NM 87111

**NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED  
2022-2023 SCHOOL CALENDAR**

<b>AUGUST</b>	Students Travel to NMSBVI First Day of School – NMSBVI	August 14 August 15
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	Labor Day Holiday (Students Travel) Students Travel No School	September 5 September 28 September 29-30
<b>OCTOBER</b>	Students Travel/Indigenous People’s Day First Quarter Ends (Report cards mailed Oct. 14)	October 10 October 7
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	Family Weekend Veteran’s Day, No Public School APS Fall Break	November 4-6 November 11 November 21-25
<b>DECEMBER</b>	Students Travel Second Quarter Ends/First Semester Ends (Report cards mailed Jan. 6) Winter Break	December 16 December 16 December 19 - January 2
<b>JANUARY</b>	Students Travel School Resumes – NMSBVI / APS Students Travel/Martin Luther King Day	January 2 January 3 January 16
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	No Public School APS Students Travel/Presidents’ Day	February 2-3 February 20
<b>MARCH</b>	Third Quarter Ends (Report cards mailed Mar. 10) Spring Break	March 3 March 20 – 24
<b>APRIL</b>	Students Travel No School	April 6 April 7 & 10
<b>MAY</b>	Fourth Quarter Ends/Second Semester Ends (Report cards mailed June 6) 10:00 Graduation; 12:30 Dismissal	May 26 May 26



## **NMSBVI SCHOOL SONG**

by

**ELIZABETH GARRETT**

There's a school in Alamo  
That we think is great,  
"Tis in fair New Mexico, called our Sunshine State."  
All our hearts beat loyally;  
Everyone is true  
To our dear old Alma Mater – Love it? Course we do!

Then cheer, Then cheer,  
Of NMSBVI are we;  
With pride each son  
And daughter hails our  
Glorious Alma Mater.  
Then cheer, Then cheer,  
Of NMSBVI are we;  
With a Boom! Bang! Rip! Roar! Here we come,  
Here we go;  
We're the greatest  
School in New Mexico!  
We're bound to win  
The victory, good old NMSBVI for thee.

## NMSBVI BELL SCHEDULE

<b>FIRST PERIOD</b>	<b>8:10 – 9:00</b>										
<b>SECOND PERIOD</b>	<b>9:05 – 9:55</b>										
<b>THIRD PERIOD</b>	<b>10:00 – 10:50</b>										
<b>FOURTH PERIOD</b>	<b>10:55 – 11:45</b>										
<b>FIFTH PERIOD</b>	<b>11:50 – 12:40</b>										
<b>LUNCH –</b> Preschool Elementary & ISP 1 Intensive Support Programs 2 & 3 Secondary	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><b>M-TH</b></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><b>Fridays</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>11:30</b></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>11:45</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>11:15</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>12:15</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>11:30</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>12:45</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>11:45</b></td> </tr> </table>	<b>M-TH</b>	<b>Fridays</b>	<b>11:30</b>		<b>11:45</b>	<b>11:15</b>	<b>12:15</b>	<b>11:30</b>	<b>12:45</b>	<b>11:45</b>
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<b>11:45</b>	<b>11:15</b>										
<b>12:15</b>	<b>11:30</b>										
<b>12:45</b>	<b>11:45</b>										
<b>SIXTH PERIOD</b>	<b>1:20 – 2:10</b>										
<b>SEVENTH PERIOD</b>	<b>2:15 – 3:05</b>										
<b>EIGHTH PERIOD</b> (Activity Period)	<b>3:10 – 4:00</b>										

**Preschool hours:**

**Morning class:**

**8:00 – 11:30**

**Afternoon class:**

**12:30 – 4:00**

**Younger Elementary (K – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) hours:**

**8:10 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.**

# general information



## **NMSBVI MISSION STATEMENT**

NMSBVI, an innovative leader and unifying entity in the field of educating students birth-high school who are blind or visually impaired, will identify students and promote quality education through collaborative relationships with students, families, and local/state/national partners through outstanding advocacy, training, resources, and support services, thus empowering all students who are blind or visually impaired to become independent, productive members of their communities.

## **NMSBVI BELIEF STATEMENTS**

- All children can learn and we value their individual talents.
- We believe that all children learn best when provided with the appropriate level of specialized instruction and the appropriate educational environment.
- We believe an atmosphere of creativity results in innovative practices and programs.
- Independence is the right and ultimate goal of every student who is blind or visually impaired and we hold ourselves accountable for excellence in preparing students for success.
- NMSBVI is and will remain a leader in the field of educating students who are blind or visually impaired.
- NMSBVI supports the education of all students with blindness and visual impairment in the state through a variety of programs as part of the continuum of services for every child.
- Families and their children who are blind or visually impaired need current information about all aspects of education and transitions.
- Education of individuals who are blind or visually impaired encompasses not only academic skills, but also specialized skills of blindness and visual impairment (the Expanded Core Curriculum) including compensatory or functional academic skills, including communication modes, orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, use of assistive technology, sensory efficiency skills and self-determination.
- Children who are blind or visually impaired should have the ability and the choice to be integrated into their communities.
- The most effective way to teach is through collaboration.
- Although NMSBVI is a specialized, independent educational entity, we work in partnership to serve students who are blind or visually impaired.

## NMSBVI STRATEGIES

1. We will support systems that result in sufficient numbers of specialized staff in the field of blindness and visual impairment for the State of New Mexico.
2. We will advance systems to convey and receive information about blindness and visual impairment educational services, trends, research, etc. to all those involved or interested in serving students who are blind or visually impaired.
3. We will build, maintain and support systems of data-driven decision making that will be used collaboratively to determine goals, services and settings for educating New Mexico students with blindness or visual impairment.
4. We will develop systems that support the early identification as well as successful transitions of students with blindness or visual impairment and their programming across settings.
5. We will develop and maintain relationships and partnerships essential to the success of each student with blindness or visual impairment.
6. NMSBVI will develop systems to document, share, and advance the efficacy of NMSBVI comprehensive practices for educating students with visual impairments using core and expanded core curricula.

## CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

NMSBVI values a safe learning environment and maintains a drug, tobacco, alcohol, and weapons free campus.

In order to promote an environment which encourages positive growth and self-esteem for all students, **NMSBVI has banned a number of materials from campus. The banned materials include, but are not limited to, the following: alcohol, drug paraphernalia, drugs, fireworks, guns, knives, pornography, and any music, DVD's, videos, clothing, or posters which promote racism, violence, suicide, drugs, etc.**

If you have questions regarding any banned material, or if you are not sure whether or not the material is allowable, please check with the Special Education Director.

## VISITING CAMPUS

Parents/relatives of students are welcome to visit NMSBVI, *unless this is prohibited due to the state of the pandemic*. Whenever possible, advance plans for visiting on campus should be made with the Program Coordinator, Principal or Special Education Director. All visitors must check in with Administration during school hours or Health Services or the Residential Life Supervisor during non-school hours to obtain a visitor pass. Only those visitors whose names are on the Student Update form may visit students.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event that inclement weather occurs, the following plan will be in effect:

- If Alamogordo Public Schools run a delayed schedule, NMSBVI will run on the same delayed

schedule. Residential students will remain in the dorm until school start time.

- If Alamogordo Public Schools closes school, NMSBVI will also cancel classes. Residential students will remain in the dorm with meals provided in the dorm, unless we do remote learning in lieu of a snow day.

## **CAMPUS SURVEILLANCE**

The New Mexico School for the Blind & Visually Impaired is committed to providing a safe and secure educational environment for its students, faculty, and staff. The School seeks to deter the destruction of School property and other conduct prohibited by law and School policies, as well as aid in the investigation process when disciplinary infractions are reported. The Superintendent designates the School Safety and Security Coordinator (“SSC”) as its law enforcement unit responsible for the physical safety and security for purposes of FERPA compliance. The SSC is authorized to create and maintain records for law enforcement purposes, including but not limited to the creation and preservation of evidence through digital surveillance for use in potential criminal prosecutions and student disciplinary proceedings. The SSC is authorized to install and maintain a video surveillance system (“VSS”) on all School campuses. The VSS will monitor and record activity and School property and such information may be used for law enforcement purposes. (NMSBVI, Policy 107)

### **DEFINITIONS**

- A. School property** – means all property owned or under the direct control of the School.
- B. Video surveillance media** – means digital video, videotape or any other tape, computer hard-drive, CD, disk, or other device or medium used to store information from a video surveillance system. It also means a closed-circuit television camera, video, physical or other mechanical, electronic, or digital surveillance system or device that enables continuous or periodic video recording, observing, or monitoring of personal information from individuals in open, public spaces on School property.

### **SCOPE OF SURVEILLANCE**

- A.** The VSS shall be designed and operated so as to minimize intrusions on personal property.
- B.** The VSS shall monitor only those areas on School property where individuals do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy. For example, video surveillance may monitor hallways, classrooms, parking lots, and other outside common areas, but not washrooms, changing rooms, or offices.
- C.** The VSS shall not be directed towards property or windows of property adjacent to School property.

## **EIGHTEEN PLUS YEARS (ADULT STUDENTS)**

By law, an eighteen-year-old is an adult and has the right to make their own decisions and control his/her own Free Appropriate Public Education decisions. Unless guardianship has been determined by age 18, NMSBVI will assume that the student has this decision-making power. NMSBVI transition coordinator is available to help families to determine if guardianship is needed and to provide information about the guardianship process. NMSBVI strives to maintain parent/guardian involvement in their child’s education by encouraging adult students (18 years and older) to include their family in all decision-making processes.

## **STUDENT REGISTRATION / ANNUAL RE-ENROLLMENT**

Parents are required to complete all registration materials annually before their child enters NMSBVI. Re-enrollment must be completed via email and mail. The enrollment packet will be emailed and must be returned through email prior to July 15<sup>th</sup>. The medical documents will be mailed and must be returned with the pre-paid envelope by July 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Needed Yearly at Enrollment:**

- Enrollment packet including enrollment update, student releases, video permission and contact information.
- Medical information including medical history, family physician's name, address and phone number, names of recurrent or chronic medical problems, special diets or allergies, current immunizations record, and current medical insurance information.

**During the school year, please call the education office (575) 439-4458, to inform the school of any change in general information** (e.g., address, telephone number, permissions, etc.).

## **PHOTOGRAPH RELEASE**

We request permission to photograph/video your child with our assurance that the photographs will be used only for official School purposes. Your signature on the photograph/video release permission form will permit us to photograph or video your child and publish or otherwise use the photographs/videos as needed for instruction or for press coverage. Examples include press coverage of special programs, field trips, or training videos.

## **STUDENT FILES**

NMSBVI maintains students' educational and health files. The custodian of these files may release information from the records only:

- With written consent of parent, guardian or adult student; or,
- Upon order of a court; or,
- As required by the Superintendent or his/her designee in the discharge of official duties.

All requests for records should be addressed to:

Records  
New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
1900 North White Sands Blvd.  
Alamogordo, NM 88310

**\*\*Please note that a fee may be charged to copy any records that are released.\*\***

## **ATTENDANCE FOR CREDIT**

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least ninety percent (90%) of the days the class is offered. A student who attends less than ninety percent (90%), but more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the days the class is offered may only receive credit for the class if he/she completes a plan, approved by the Principal that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class.

If a student attends less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the days a class is offered or has not completed a plan approved by the Principal, then the student will be referred to the Attendance

Review Committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit, if appropriate.

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive credit will depend on whether the class is a single semester or full year course.

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the Attendance Review Committee will use the following guidelines:

- The committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the Board of Regents by filing a written request with the Superintendent within five (5) business days of notification of committee's decision.

## COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

All students shall be expected to attend school as many days as school is in session in accordance with the Compulsory Attendance Laws found in the New Mexico Statutes Annotated 22-12-2 and 6.10.8 NMAC 1978.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**TARDY** – Those students that are not in their appropriately assigned classroom when class is designated to begin.

**EXEMPT** – School-sponsored, official activities, or religious holidays are EXEMPT and will not be counted in the total of TEN (10) credit loss absences.

**SCHOOL-SPONSORED** – are those monitored by school personnel and/or for which school transportation is provided, or those sanctioned and approved by the school administration.

**EXCUSED ABSENCE** – an absence for which work can be made up. Excused absences include such circumstances as illness, medical appointments (require doctor's note), family emergency, religious holiday/practice, and other valid reasons as determined by the Principal.

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCE** - An absence for which no appropriate excuse has been provided by the student's parent/legal guardian within the time limit provided by this policy. Special family situations may be considered appropriate for excused absence when prior approval is received from the school.

**TRUANT** – A student who has accumulated five (5) unexcused absences within any twenty

(20) day period.

**HABITUAL TRUANT** – A student who has accumulated ten (10) or more unexcused absences within a school year.

After the **third** (3rd) unexcused absence, a letter will be sent home informing the parents/legal guardians that the school's records show three (3) unexcused absences in one (1) or more of their student's classes.

After the **fifth** (5th) unexcused absence, a letter will be sent home informing the parents/legal guardians that school records show five (5) unexcused absences in one (1) or more of their student's classes. In addition, the parents/legal guardians will be required to meet with the Superintendent or his/her designee for the purpose of identifying the cause(s) of the unexcused absences and to develop appropriate interventions designed to eliminate unexcused absences.

After the **seventh** (7<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence, a letter will be sent home informing the parents/legal guardians that school records show seven (7) unexcused absences in one (1) or more of their student's classes. In addition, the parent/legal guardian will be required to meet with the Superintendent or his/her designee for the purpose of identifying the cause(s) of the unexcused absences and to establish a written plan designed to prevent future unexcused absences. The plan will be confirmed in writing and signed by the Superintendent or his/her designee and the parents/legal guardians.

If parents/legal guardians fail to arrange, or appear for, a conference regarding unexcused absences within ten (10) days of notice from the school, the school will provide written notice to the probation services office of the judicial district where the student resides.

If a student accumulates ten (10) or more unexcused absences within a school year the Superintendent or his/her designee shall give written notice to the parents/legal guardians of the habitual truancy, by certified mail or by personal service. If there are any other unexcused absences after delivery of a written notice of habitual truancy, the student shall, within seven (7) days of the unexcused absence, be reported to the probation services office of the judicial district where the student resides for an investigation as to whether the student shall be considered to be a neglected child, or a child in a family in need of services.

<b>PROCEDURES TO REPORT AN ABSENCE/TARDY</b>
--

1. Parents/legal guardians are required to contact **Health Services (575) 439-4457**, or the **Transportation Manager (575) 430-7396**, prior to or during an absence.
2. If a student is absent for a medical appointment, a physician's written note stating day and time of appointment is required.
3. When a student returns from an absence a parent must send a signed note describing the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older and their own guardian.  
When absent for more than three (3) consecutive days because of illness, a student must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school or these days will be counted as unexcused.
4. Long-term or chronic illness must be verified by a physician's written statement and a parent should have on-going contact with the Principal or his/her designee for the duration of the illness. In the event of a long-term or chronic illness during which the student is not able to access his/ her educational program into which he/she was IEP'd (longer than 10 consecutive days), NMSBVI is required to hold an addendum IEP in order to consider a

change of placement in order to address educational needs in a different setting.

5. Third (3<sup>rd</sup>) and subsequent tardy (minor/moderate student incident) in any class per semester will be referred to the Principal or his/her designee.
6. A tardy will not be excused unless they are verified doctor/dental appointments or the tardy is verified by the Principal.

### **CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT REPORTING**

Pursuant to Section 32A-4-3, NMSA 1978, (as amended 2005), any NMSBVI staff member knowing or having reasonable suspicion that a child/adolescent/dependent adult is abused or neglected will report the matter immediately to the State of New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department/Adult Protective Services Central Intake at 1-800-797-3260 or Tribal Law Enforcement or social services agencies for an Indian child/adolescent/dependent adult residing in Indian country.

### **PETS**

Personal pets of residential/day students are not permitted on campus; the exception is a guide dog that has been trained by an accredited program and assigned to the student.

### **DISTRIBUTION OF PRINTED MATERIAL**

No printed material or literature may be distributed on the property of NMSBVI without prior approval and consent of the Superintendent.

### **FUNDRAISERS**

Any on or off-campus fundraisers by individual students or classes must be approved in advance by the Superintendent.

### **CHURCH ACTIVITIES**

The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired will respect your child's participation in off campus religious activities. Parents requesting their child attend specific church activities, prayer meetings, Bible Study, etc., must provide NMSBVI with information regarding the day, time, and transportation arrangements.

### **DAY STUDENTS**

- Day students may be on campus after school hours for supervised programs such as Resource, Athletics, Student Council/Key Club, and Choir or pre-planned after school events to which they are invited.
- Day students must be picked up promptly at the end of the activity for which they were on campus after hours.
- Day students are not eligible to participate in afternoon/evening Residential Life activities, such as the Recreation Center unless individually permitted by the Residential Life Supervisor. **Consent by the Residential Life Supervisor must be given for a day student to be on campus in the evening.**



# student conduct



## STUDENT RIGHTS

Students have a right to expect courtesy, fairness, and respect from members of the school staff and other students.

Students have the right to attend class and pursue their education under competent instructors.

Students have the right to privacy of their personal possessions unless there is reason to believe that the student is in possession of or concealing materials prohibited by law or school regulation.

Students have a right to expect and have available to them clear and understandable rules of student conduct.

Students have the right to form and express their opinions on issues orally, in writing or other modes of communication without jeopardizing their relations with staff.

Students have the right to appropriate counseling for personal and educational problems. Access to consultation within a reasonable period of time must be assured.

Students have the right to be protected by legal provisions which prohibit the release of personal information to other than legally authorized persons without the consent of the parent, guardian, or eligible students.

## CANE USAGE

Unless specifically designated by an IEP Team as a student who does not need a cane, **students are required to have and make proper use of canes while on campus**. Residential Life Staff will remind students to take canes with them and to use them. All NMSBVI Staff will remind students to use their cane. Students who choose not to use their cane (or use them appropriately) are subject to disciplinary measures.

A student's first cane is provided at no cost. Replacement canes will be given as needed, provided that the Orientation and Mobility Instructor/staff member involved feels that damage to their original cane was caused by normal wear and tear from proper usage. If neglect/abuse of property is suspected, the involved student(s) will be required to pay for the replacement cane. Payment may be in the form of money or community service.

## DRESS CODE

The Board of Regents and Administration encourages students to dress conservatively and appropriately. The following is a list of violations of the Student Dress Code:

- a. Bare feet. Shoes or appropriate footwear shall be worn at all times.
- b. See-through or revealing clothing.
- c. Bare midriffs.
- d. Pajama pants.
- e. Inappropriate clothing, jewelry or tattoos.
- f. During the educational day, hats will not be allowed in any building or in the classroom unless by IEP decision.
- g. Any article of clothing that graphically depicts scenes of violence, death or other gruesome, macabre, or cruel acts.
- h. Any article of clothing that depicts alcohol, drugs, gangs, tobacco or sexually suggestive materials.

- i. Any clothing accessory that could be used as a weapon.
- j. Wearing pants below the waistline (sagging and dragging).

Skirts or shorts may be worn; however, the length of the skirt or shorts must be below the fingertips when the arms are relaxed by the side.

Appropriate underwear is to be worn properly at all times.

Students shall wear proper clothing to off-campus events which may be determined by staff conducting the event. Failure to arrive in proper attire for a field trip will result in the privilege being denied for the trip and credit (if appropriate) shall be lost.

The Dress Code shall be reviewed and revised on a yearly basis.

<b>PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION</b>
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The following is a list of appropriate displays of affection between students:

- a. Hello hug, frontal that is brief in nature.
- b. Side hugs while standing or sitting upright.
- c. Resting head on shoulder, side by side.
- d. Holding hands.
- e. A brief kiss for “hello”, “goodnight” or “goodbye”.
- f. Arm(s) around waist side-by-side and around shoulders.
- g. Arms around shoulders.

**Sexual Conduct:** Any sexual conduct, including but not limited to, intentional touching of another person’s genitals, groin, inner thigh, buttocks, or breasts, or clothing covering those areas, is not permitted on school property, on school transportation, and/or at school-related or school-sponsored activities.

**Dating:**

1. Elementary Students are not allowed to date.
2. Students are only allowed to date others who are close to their age (within 48 months).
3. Students who are above 18 years of age may date students younger than 18 years of age, but will be made aware of the potential legal ramifications of engaging in sexual activity as defined above.  
(parents of the minor student dating a student above 18 years of age will be notified if/when we become aware of the dating).
4. Dating must abide by the rules above regarding sexual activity and public displays of affection.

<b>MISCONDUCT</b>
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Any student who willfully violates or fails to follow NMSBVI rules or regulations, or performs an act, which materially interferes with or is detrimental to the orderly operation of a classroom or school, a school-sponsored activity, or any other aspect of the educational process at NMSBVI, will be subject to discipline or suspension.

In the case of suspension, the nature and circumstance of the violation must reasonably warrant a

suspension and the length of the suspension imposed. As a general rule, no student shall be suspended unless another form of corrective action has been previously imposed upon the student as a consequence of misconduct of the same nature.

If, however, the violation of school rules for student conduct constitutes “exceptional misconduct” as defined below, suspension may be imposed without prior alternative corrective action.

“Exceptional misconduct” is a violation of NMSBVI rules for student conduct, which is so serious in nature and/or serious in terms of the disruptive effect upon the operation of the school as to warrant an immediate resort to suspension.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

NMSBVI has established standards of conduct for students and the disciplinary process to protect members of the school community, maintain and advance its educational mission, and provide for the orderly conduct of the school’s activities. School policy and rules of conduct shall be applicable to all students in any program or activity conducted by NMSBVI.

Teachers will develop guidelines for conduct, required rules, grading procedures, and other teacher determined standards and have these expectations posted in accessible formats in their classrooms.

School and residential life rules, as well as policies and procedures for discipline, will be clearly communicated to students in the following ways:

- a. General and special rules (staff expectations of students) will be listed and posted in each classroom and each dorm.
- b. Rules and lists of expectations will be reviewed orally and in written form. Students should review and sign a written copy stating they understand the rules.
- c. Policies and Procedures for Discipline will be reviewed orally with students.

## **UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR**

The following are examples of unacceptable behavior necessitating optional disciplinary action, up to and including short or long-term suspension from school.

- a. Open or persistent defiance of authority.
- b. Physical or verbal assault upon student or school personnel.
- c. Creating or attempting to create a disturbance.
- d. Unauthorized or excessive absences from class.
- e. Excessive tardiness.
- f. Willful disobedience.
- g. Profanity or vulgarity. Clothing, books or other possessions containing any form of vulgarity, profanity or obscenity.
- h. Disrespect for school property or damage to school property. In case of damage to or loss of school property, the appropriate administrator will conduct an investigation and seek appropriate restitution for the loss or damage. If items are lost or damaged, parents will be notified. Restitution may include the cost of replacement or repair and will be charged to the individual borrowing the item.
- i. Stealing, gambling, extortion, concealing and/or withholding stolen property.
- j. Bullying (verbal, physical, or electronic).
- k. Violations of the Dress Code.

- l. Use of tobacco on campus.
- m. Fighting, extortion, arson.
- n. Sexual harassment.
- o. Sexual contact.
- p. Gang affiliation/behavior.
- q. Selling, possessing or using (or having used within six hours before arriving at school) a narcotic, alcohol or dangerous drug, including, but not limited to marijuana, LSD, heroin, and barbiturates: or non-narcotic intoxicants such as un-prescribed cough medicine, glue, gasoline, beer or any form of intoxicating liquor or alcohol and the possession of drug paraphernalia.
- r. Theft.
- s. Immoral conduct.
- t. Disruptive behavior or failure to comply with school transportation providers while on a school bus, suburban or car.
- u. Possession or use of weapons.
- v. Vandalism.
- w. Verbal or implied threats or threatening gestures by an individual or group.

A Progressive Discipline Plan will be guided by the following:

- a. **DISCIPLINE:**  
Routine discipline is involving minor infractions of rules or inappropriate conduct which is not serious enough to report to the supervisor or administrator and can normally be handled by teaching staff, residential life assistants, or related professional staff.
- b. **MINOR/MODERATE STUDENT INCIDENT:**
  - 1. First Offense Verbal Warning by instructional or residential staff.
  - 2. Second Offense Elementary students – natural consequence given by teacher or Residential Life Supervisor.  
Secondary Students – natural consequence given by teacher or Residential Life Supervisor as well as a self-reflection worksheet.
  - 3. Third Offense During the school day – referral to Principal.  
After the school day is over – referral to the Residential Life Supervisor.

After third offense, referral to Special Education Director.
- c. **SEVERE/SERIOUS STUDENT INCIDENT:**  
For each severe/serious student incident, the following actions must be taken immediately:
  - 1. Immediate referral to Principal or Residential Life Supervisor.
  - 2. Special Education Director notified by Principal or Residential Life Supervisor.
  - 3. Parents notified; referral to School Social Worker/Counselor.

## DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Following is a list of optional disciplinary actions which may be imposed. The order of the list is not sequential, but optional.

- a. On-campus community service.
- b. In-school detention.
- c. Removal from class or group.
- d. Verbal or documented warning to student.
- e. Contract or action plan.
- f. Activity suspension.
- g. Parental notification.
- h. Confiscation or temporary holding of personal items (ex: cell phones).
- i. Probationary period.
- j. Financial restitution.
- k. Refer to other social or educational agencies.
- l. Short-term out of school suspension.
- m. Long-term out of school suspension.
- n. Involve law enforcement or juvenile probation office.
- o. Any other disciplinary action deemed appropriate under the circumstances.
- p. Expulsion.

**POLICY ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND AVERSIVE THERAPY**

Corporal punishment, under any circumstance, is forbidden. No employee shall administer aversive therapy except as provided for under the New Mexico Administrative Code and the IEP process.

**DISRUPTING SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION**

Continued disruptive behavior or non-compliance to reasonable requests by school transportation personnel may result in the student not being allowed to ride in NMSBVI vehicles to and from NMSBVI. The parents/guardian would then assume the responsibility for the student’s transportation.

**PROHIBITED BY STATE REGULATIONS**

State Statutes or Regulations set forth certain acts prohibited in all New Mexico schools. The commission of or participation in the activities designated below is prohibited in all New Mexico public schools and is prohibited for students whenever they are subject to school control. Acts prohibited by regulations:

- a. Criminal or delinquent acts.
- b. Gang related activity.
- c. Sexual harassment.
- d. Disruptive conduct.
- e. Refusal to identify self.
- f. Refusal to cooperate with school personnel.

State regulations regarding rules of conduct for New Mexico Public Schools are made part of this handbook by reference as if set forth in full. Copies of this regulation are on file in the Director of Student Support Services’ office.

**STUDENTS DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES**

Students at NMSBVI have the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others. If students make decisions that hurt others or their property, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with their IEP. In disciplinary cases, students are entitled to due process. This means that students:

- a. Must be informed of accusations against them.
- b. Must have the opportunity to accept or deny the accusations.
- c. Must have explained to them the factual basis for the accusations.
- d. Must have a chance to present an alternative factual position if the accusation is denied.

<b>PROCEDURE FOR SUSPENSION</b>
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A student may be suspended (excluded from classroom instruction) by the Superintendent or designee for a period of more than one (1) day but not to exceed ten (10) days. Should any student become subject to a suspension of more than ten (10) days, the following procedure will be used to determine consequences:

- a. An IEP Team consisting of members listed below shall meet as soon as reasonably possible:
  - 1. The student.
  - 2. Parent/Guardian.
  - 3. Members of the NMSBVI administrative staff.
  - 4. Others as appropriate.
  
- b. The IEP team shall review the situation for which the student has become subject to suspension and make the following determinations:
  - 1. Is/was the situation related to the student's disability (manifestation determination)?
  - 2. Does the situation warrant suspension?
  - 3. What type and length of suspension (if determined appropriate) should result?
  - 4. What, if any, additional agencies (i.e. CYFD, local school district, police, etc.) shall be notified/become involved?
  - 5. Which team members shall accept responsibility for each notification?
  - 6. How will the student's educational program be provided and monitored until the student is re-admitted to school?

**EMERGENCY SUSPENSION**

The Superintendent or his/her designee may suspend a student without a hearing if reasonable cause exists to indicate:

- a. The physical safety of the accused student or of others is endangered.
- b. The school is in the midst of a violent upheaval.
- c. The student is causing substantial interference with the operation of the school.

The emergency suspension will terminate when it is determined by the student's IEP team that the student's presence at school will not result in a situation warranting further actions.

<b>GANG AFFILIATION / BEHAVIOR</b>
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The policy of NMSBVI prohibits gangs and gang-related behavior or incidents.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Gangs** – Any assembly of three (3) or more individuals who gather together on a continuing basis, whose purpose, NMSBVI reasonably believes, is to commit anti-social behavior or to violate school policy.

**Gang-related Behavior or Incidents** – Any behavior or event, including, but not limited to the following items, which has the effect of disrupting school activities or fosters, enhances or encourages gang activity at NMSBVI:

- a. Possession, wearing, use, distribution, or display of any sign, symbol, badge, color, or other item that is evidence of affiliation with, or membership in, a gang. Students will not be permitted to wear pants below the waistline (sagging and dragging) or wear caps, bandanas, handkerchiefs, shoestrings or any other item associated with gang-related behavior.
- b. Participation in any act, either verbal or non-verbal, to include gestures, expressions, handshakes, etc. that may indicate affiliation with, or membership in, a gang.
- c. Participation in any act that may further the interest in gang affiliation or gang membership.
- d. Participation in any act that may be evidence of intimidation, threats, “pay for protection,” or any other behavior of potential violence.
- e. Participation in the writing, painting, or inscribing of gang-related graffiti, to include messages, symbols or signs on school premises.
- f. To assemble or congregate as a gang or members of a gang for any purpose.

<b>CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES</b>
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It is a violation of school policy to sell, possess or use a narcotic, alcohol or dangerous drugs, including, but not limited to marijuana, methamphetamines, heroin, and barbiturates; or non-narcotic intoxicants such as un-prescribed cough medicine, glue, gasoline, beer (including 3.2 beer), or any form of intoxicating liquor or alcohol. It is also a violation of school policy to possess any type of drug paraphernalia. Students who distribute and/or sell alcoholic beverages, unlawful drugs, controlled substances, hallucinogens/inhalants or items that purport to be any of the foregoing to other students or persons during school time, on school premises, on school transportation or during school-sponsored activities are subject to long-term suspension and will be referred to law enforcement.

Students who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action or may be subject to the filing of criminal charges depending upon the severity of the infraction. In addition, a student will be subject to disciplinary action(s), including short-term suspension or long-term suspension from school, when charges are filed in any state or federal court accusing the student of a criminal offense. This applies to crimes that occur on or off campus. Any NMSBVI staff member who knows or in good faith suspects any student of using or abusing alcohol or drugs shall report such use or abuse in accordance with NMSBVI, Policy 516.

Students who violate this policy may be provided the opportunity to correct unacceptable behavior while remaining in school. If behavior is not corrected, students may be suspended and not permitted to return unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. These acts of unacceptable behavior will not be permitted while students are on or near school premises, riding school

transportation or attending any school-sponsored activity. Blood test and/or urine analysis may be requested and results utilized for specific purposes in accordance with NMSBVI, Policy 150, Alcohol and Drug-Free School and Campuses and Alcohol and Drug-Free Work Place.

Law enforcement officials will be notified to make the determination regarding the student being in possession of or under the influence of alcohol, illegal substances and/or drug paraphernalia. The Superintendent or designee will notify the parents/guardians. The Superintendent or his/her designee may also require the student to receive urinalysis or blood testing prior to disciplinary actions being imposed. The student will receive one or more of the following disciplinary actions which include but are not limited to:

- a. Counseling with a qualified alcohol/drug counselor.
- b. Attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous.
- c. The student may be given a long-term suspension. During any period of long-term suspension, the student will forfeit the privilege of participating in or attending any and all extracurricular activities.

### SMOKING

NMSBVI, Policy 145, prohibits the use of all tobacco products, including cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vape pens, nicotine pouches, cigars, pipes, snuff, and chewing tobacco, by students, staff, parents, guardians and visitors, in school buildings, on school grounds, in school vehicles, or during school functions away from school property.

Students under the age of 21 are not permitted to have any tobacco products on campus; infractions against this policy will result in discipline which may include but is not limited to parent/guardian notification, referral to a smoking cessation program, detention assignment, campused and in-school or out-of-school suspension.

Students, over the age of 21, who smoke must surrender all smoking products to the Residential Life Supervisor for safekeeping. Students who do not surrender all smoking products will be subject to disciplinary procedures. Students may only smoke in designated areas off campus. Students who smoke will be offered a smoking cessation program and will receive education related to the long-term health hazards of smoking.

### POSSESSION OR USE OF WEAPONS

In order to comply with the Gun-Free Schools Act, any student of NMSBVI who uses or possesses a firearm or other weapon at school, at any school sponsored event, or in or upon school property, including school transportation, may be subject to discipline, up to and including long-term suspension or expulsion.

**Firearms are defined in Title 18 of the U.S. Code, Section 921, as:**

- a. Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive.
- b. The frame or receiver of such a weapon.
- c. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer.
- d. Any destructive device including any explosives, incendiary or poison gas, bomb, grenade or rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce or any device similar to the above.

## **THREATS TO SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

Any threat of physical harm to school personnel, whether verbal, written, or conveyed in any manner, or assault upon school personnel will result in disciplinary action.

## **BULLYING**

Any threat or act of bullying, whether verbal, written, or conveyed in any manner, inflicted against students or school personnel will result in disciplinary action. Bullying is defined in NMSBVI, School Policy 517.9. Any reports of bullying must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent or his/her designee. Reports may be submitted by staff, student, parent and/or guardian on the student's behalf. Investigation of allegations will occur within two (2) school days, and a written decision will be completed within ten (10) school days of the report of abuse.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES / CELL PHONES**

- All personal electronic devices (including but not limited to: cell phones, video game devices, personal music devices, voice assisted devices, and walkie-talkies) will be prohibited during the education day with the exception of meal time.
- Any materials electronic or hard copy that contain violence or profanity will be confiscated and returned to parents/guardians with the agreement that it not be returned to school.
- Students will not access online content that contains profanity, violence or other prohibited content on **any** web pages (Example: YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc.).
- Students are not allowed to take pictures or videos or record staff or other students without that person's permission.
- Students are prohibited from using any computer, cell phone, or other communication device (on or off campus) to harass or bully.
- Any student abusing the use of their personal electronic devices will have the device confiscated until the end of the day. A repeated offense within the same week will result in the device being confiscated for the rest of the week. Any repeated offenses the student will not be allowed to have the device on campus for the remainder of the year.
- Students will only wear one earbud in ear during lunchtime or any time they need to be able to hear staff instructions, but are otherwise allowed to be on their electronic devices.
- Parties that have access to the electronic device, parent and student, will not utilize the device to listen in, or record, at times other than time of conversation between those two parties and with consent of both parties.
- When student is utilizing speaker option to engage in a conversation with another, both parties shall have no expectation of privacy from others that may hear the conversation.

## **E-MAIL / SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE**

When using the school's computers, the students will sign and agree to follow the Internet Access Agreement. Students who opt to use social media will receive specific training and support in order to make wise decisions. The following guidelines will be used:

- NMSBVI's code of conduct for students applies to all online communication. It is acceptable to disagree with others' opinions; however, it must be handled respectfully.
- Criticism must be constructive, not hurtful. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.
- Be safe online. Never give out personal information including last names, phone numbers,

addresses, exact birthdates, and pictures.

- Do not share passwords with anyone except teachers or parents.
- Linking to other websites to support your thoughts and ideas is recommended. However, be sure to read the entire article prior to linking to ensure that all information is appropriate for a school setting.
- Do your own work! Do not use other people's intellectual property without their permission. Be aware that it is a violation of copyright law to copy and paste others' thoughts and claim them as your own. It is a good practice to hyperlink to your sources.
- Be aware that pictures, videos, songs and audio clips may also be protected under copyright laws. Verify that you have permission to use the images, videos, songs or other clips.
- Students are prohibited from using any computer, cell phone, or other communication device (on or off campus) to harass or bully.
- Students will not access online content that contains profanity, violence or other prohibited content on **any** web pages (Example: YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc.).

Students who do not abide by these terms and conditions may lose their opportunity to take part in the project and/or access to future use of online tools.

### **VANDALISM**

NMSBVI may prosecute to the full extent of the law any individual who willfully destroys, mutilates or disfigures NMSBVI school property of any kind.

Restitution for willful destruction of school property or personal property deemed essential for learning is the responsibility of students and parents.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

All students have a right to be educated in an environment free from sexual harassment by other students or adults. Students shall not engage in verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed toward another student or an adult. This prohibition applies whether the conduct is by word, gesture or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors, sexual assault or unnecessary touching.

Sexual harassment may take many forms, including but not limited to:

- a. Leering, staring, sexual flirtations or propositions.
- b. Slurs, threats, verbal abuse, derogatory comments or degrading descriptions.
- c. Graphic verbal comments about an individual's body, overly personal conversation.
- d. Sexual jokes, stories, drawings, pictures or gestures.
- e. Spreading of sexual rumors.
- f. Teasing or sexual remarks about students enrolled in a predominantly single-sex class.
- g. Touching of an individual's body or clothes in a sexual way.
- h. Limiting a student's access to educational opportunities because of gender.
- i. Basing academic and/or student activity privileges on submission to sexual conduct from students or staff.
- j. Cornering or blocking the normal movements of an individual in a sexual manner.
- k. Displaying sexually suggestive objects in the educational environment.
- l. Sending electronic content of a sexual nature.

Any student who believes he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should report the incident to a teacher, counselor, the principal or the Special Education Director. Allegations of sexual harassment shall be investigated and, if substantiated, corrective or disciplinary action taken. This action may include suspension of the student and suspension or termination of the employee. NMSBVI prohibits retaliatory behavior against a student who complains or participates in the complaint process. A complaint of sexual harassment will not reflect negatively on the student's academic standing, rights or privileges.

### **STUDENT RIGHTS IN REGARD TO SEARCH**

The physical facilities of the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired are temporarily assigned to students for use by them, but are not and do not become the property of the students. **Contents in desks, lockers, and rooms assigned to students are subject to inspection at any time for cleanliness, missing property, banned items, and evidence of vandalism.**

Inspection and search can be conducted for the location and discovery of items such as non-prescription drugs, apparatus for the administration of controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, pornographic materials, fireworks, tobacco, weapons, explosives, poisons, and stolen property.

When a search focuses on a particular student because of a suspected rule violation, school officials will, if circumstances permit, document in writing reasons for believing a search is justified before making the search.

If possible, student will be notified prior to a search, and the student will be present when the search is made. In the absence of the student, a witness will be present with a school official.

If a major reason for a search is to seek evidence of a criminal violation, school officials will report the information to law enforcement officials and allow them to conduct the search subject to standards applicable to police searches. If the police seek permission from school officials to search a student, his/her property, or his/her locker to obtain evidence for criminal prosecution, school officials will require the police to obtain a search warrant unless the search falls within one of the exceptions of the Fourth Amendment's search warrant requirements.

The above safeguards will be observed unless, in exceptional cases, they interfere with school officials' affirmative duty to maintain order and discipline in the school and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the students and staff.

In the case of theft reported by a student or staff member in dorms, educational settings or transportation:

- Staff will interview the student to gather information and help the student attempt to locate the item.
- A reasonable search of others' belongings will be conducted by NMSBVI staff. If possible, student will be notified prior to a search of their belongings, and the student will be present when the search is made. In the absence of the student, a witness will be present with a school official.
- At least two people will be present at all times during a search of a room and/or personal belongings, one of which will be the School Security Coordinator or designee.

- In the case of items valued under \$250, an incident report will be completed. The student, student's parent(s) or school administration has the option to file a police report.
- In the case of items valued over \$250, an incident report will be completed and a police report will be filed by NMSBVI. It is important to note that even if a police report is filed, police will not conduct a search of any NMSBVI premises without a search warrant.
- NMSBVI will not be held responsible for lost items. Items such as CDs, CD players, iPod, mp3 players, money or other personal belongings brought onto campus or in school vehicles are the responsibility of the student. If the parent/guardian wants personal belongings or money controlled by staff, it must be clearly identified and given to staff. The safest option for students in terms of keeping cash secure on campus is use of the student account.

# emergency procedures



## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

To ensure the safety and care of students and employees, written procedures have been established as a guide for students and employees to follow in an emergency evacuation. For further information please refer to the Safety Procedures section of the NMSBVI website.

The procedures are reviewed orally with the students and drills are practiced regularly, both during the school day and the evening hours of operation. The emergency procedures are also reviewed annually by the NMSBVI Safety Committee.

## **STUDENT PROCEDURES IN AN EMERGENCY**

### **Emergency Drills**

Practice drills for all emergencies will be regularly scheduled throughout the school year in order to familiarize students (and staff) with the correct procedures.

In a drill and/or actual emergency, students will follow these procedures:

### **Fire, Explosion and Bomb Threat:**

When an alarm sounds and an evacuation of a building is required by the school administration and/or on-scene emergency service coordinator, occupants will be informed of where they should gather outside, a safe distance from the building(s). Occupants shall respond to the roll call and remain calm. Do not return to the building until you receive instructions to do so from the school administration or on-scene emergency service coordinator.

If you discover a fire, smoke, or intense heat and the alarm has not been sounded, activate the nearest fire alarm by pulling the handle on the fire alarm box as you are exiting the building.

### **Tornadoes and High Winds:**

When weather conditions indicate the possibility of a severe windstorm or tornado, the Superintendent will assign a staff member to monitor weather reports and report bulletins to him/her. At the first indication that an emergency exists, the Superintendent will direct staff to move the students into sheltered areas where they will remain until the emergency has ended. Remain Sheltered in Place until released by the school's Safety & Security Coordinator.

If staff does not have advance warning, all students are to remain in the building they are in and be kept away from windows and away from the windward side of the building in interior hallways if possible.

### **Lockdown Procedure:**

If the Superintendent, or his/her designee, determines that there is sufficient cause to believe that imminent danger is present, the Superintendent, or his/her designee shall call for lockdown of all buildings in which children receive instruction, reside, or in which staff are assigned, as appropriate.

Lockdown will be indicated by phone messages to key personnel, or announcement on the school's public address system, dependent on the situation. In the case of any lockdown procedure, information will be shared with key staff as the situation progresses. A lockdown will be released by the NMSBVI Safety & Security Coordinator who will be in close communication with law enforcement.



# medical services



## GENERAL INFORMATION

Health Services' phone number is (800) 437-3505, ext. 4457. Direct dial: (575) 439-4457. The fax number is (575) 439-4494.

The Health Services department is usually staffed from 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m Monday-Thursday, 6:00 am – 1:00 p.m on Fridays, and 1:00 pm – 9:00 pm on Sundays.

School nurses and other trained staff take care of normal health care needs, treat minor illnesses and injuries and the nurses also administer medication. NMSBVI does not have the facilities for surgery, immediate post-surgical care or for more severe types of illnesses. The local hospital will be used for emergencies. When a child becomes too ill to attend classes for several days or is infected with a contagious disease, arrangements will be made to transport the child home.

Whenever it is determined that a child should be seen by a physician, every effort will be made to contact the parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are also informed when their child is seriously ill, has a fever, needs a new medication or if an accident requires emergency treatment. Emergency phone numbers are not used for routine calls or mild illnesses.

### IMPORTANT!

**If your son or daughter is ill when it is time to return to school, please keep him/her home.** Call the Transportation Manager on the cellular phone (1-575-430-7396) or the Health Services Manager at (1-575-430-9445) and inform them of your child's impending absence and date of his/her expected return. If you cannot reach anyone, you may call Health Services (1-800-437-3505, ext. 4457) or the school office (1-800-437-3505, ext. 4458). Health Services re-opens at 3:00 p.m. on travel days.

**The Department of Health requires that you immediately notify the school if your child has received a diagnosis of a contagious disease.** Reports should be made to the Health Services 1-800-437-3505, ext. 4457. The conditions that require notification include, but are not limited to: Polio, strep throat, tuberculosis, scarletina, meningitis, measles, covid19, food poisoning, chicken pox, mumps, hepatitis, impetigo, whooping cough, etc. **If your child is diagnosed with any of these, they must be cleared by a physician to return to school.**

If the student is exposed while at NMSBVI, the parent/legal guardian will be notified by a school nurse.

Only those students who can provide proof of immunizations may lawfully enroll in public schools in New Mexico. All students new to the school must provide proof of immunization at enrollment. In addition, because NMSBVI is a residential school we strongly encourage students to receive an annual FLU shot.

Proof of the following immunizations is required:

- a. DPT: (Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis)
- b. Polio
- c. Measles: (10 day and 3 day)
- d. Hepatitis B
- e. Varicella (chicken pox) or laboratory documentation of having the disease.
- f. HIB (preschool)
- g. Hepatitis A (preschool)
- h. Pneumococcal (preschool)
- i. Meningococcal (7<sup>th</sup> grade)

Medical or religious exemptions will need verification at the time of enrollment. This exemption must be renewed each year prior to enrollment through the New Mexico Department of Health.

If your child is diabetic or requires a special diet, NMSBVI staff will endeavor to follow the prescribed diet, as well as teach the child the benefits of proper nutrition. Special diets must be prescribed by your child's physician on the form that is provided in the enrollment packet.

If the student does not return to school on the scheduled travel day due to illness or medical reasons, the parent/guardian will be responsible for transportation back to school.

Special trips provided by transportation are limited to one (1) occurrence per semester. Trips must be a necessity (ex. Doctor's appointment) and must be approved by the Transportation Manager and Principal or Program Coordinator.

If your child has been ill, they must be fever free without any fever reducing medications for at least 24 hours before they return to school.

If your child is hospitalized, is treated for a serious injury or illness, or has surgery, a **Return to School Clearance Form** must be completed by the treating physician before they return to school.

**Parents/Guardians need to relay medical information directly to Health Services, not via the residential life, education department, or transportation department. \*Parents need to call Health Services and give the nurses an update any time their student goes to a medical appointment while at home so that the school is kept informed.\***

<b>MEDICATION</b>
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Any prescription medications, over-the-counter medicines, acne preparations, vitamins or supplements received or brought from home must be immediately turned over to the school nurse and the parent must provide a written doctor's order for them to be given at school. Students may not keep any of the items mentioned above in the dormitory or elsewhere on campus, except in Health Services. The exceptions to this are the following:

- Asthma inhalers may be kept in the student's possession, under a physician's order and with an emergency plan signed by the parent/guardian.
- Diabetes management medications and supplies, under a physician's order and with an

emergency plan signed by the parent/guardian and documentation from the physician that the student knows how to manage their diabetes.

- Epinephrine pen may be kept in a student's possession, under a physician's order and with documentation from the physician that the student knows how to properly administer the injection.
- Topical acne medication, with approval from the Health Service's nurse.
- Certain topical creams or lotions with approval of the Health Services nurse.

❖ **No student can be at school without all of their prescribed medications, supplements and supplies. Transportation staff cannot allow them to board without the required items. If your child does not have his/her medication at pick-up time, transportation staff will call the Health Services Manager to make necessary arrangements. If medication is being shipped from the pharmacy or by a parent, we must receive a tracking number and confirmation that the medication is in route before we can clear them for transportation on travel days.**

❖ We cannot give or have in our possession any medication or supplement that we do not have a prescriber's written order for. (Prescribers are Physicians, Dentists, Podiatrists, Nurse Practitioners, Physician's Assistants, etc.) **This includes any Over-the-Counter medications or supplements. Medications cannot be administered by the information on the pharmacy label.**

❖ If a student receives a new medication over a weekend or break, **they cannot return to school without a written order for the medication.** Please make sure to have the prescriber give you a prescription that can be given to the school as an order. It must be signed and dated.

❖ Your label on your child's prescription bottle must match the written Prescriber's order.

❖ No change in a medication/supplement can be executed, or any medication/supplement discontinued until the parent/guardian provides Health Services with a written, signed prescriber's order.

❖ Parents/guardians are responsible for providing all medications, supplements, and supplies that are prescribed for their student.

❖ All prescription medications must be in a pharmacy labeled container. **This pharmacy label cannot be altered in any way.** (e.g., directions or pill count altered.)

Daily prescription medications must have a fill date from the pharmacy within the last month.

(Exception: If your insurance provides you with a 90-day supply, then the date must be within the last 90 days.)

❖ **"As Needed" prescription medications must have a fill date within the last year.** It does not matter if the manufacturer's expiration date is still good. In NM, once the prescription label expires in one (1) year, the medication cannot be administered at school.

Pills **must not** be mixed in bottles.

❖ **You cannot pour old medications into the new medication bottle, new medications into an old bottle or in any way tamper with the prescription as it was filled at the pharmacy.**

When this occurs, the bottle is considered contaminated and cannot be used.

❖ Over-the-Counter medications or supplements must be provided in an **un-opened, original container.** Please make sure that it has not expired.

❖ **Pills cannot be shipped back and forth. (This is a Board of Pharmacy requirement.) You must have your pharmacist give you a bottle to send to school and a bottle to keep at home. This must be done at the time the medication is refilled.** The school will continue to send inhalers, eye drops, ointments, pre-packaged pills, etc. that cannot be duplicated for home and

school. But if you do have extras of any of these types of medications, is it preferred that they not be shipped back and forth.

- ❖ If your student has an albuterol inhaler for asthma, you must provide two (2) inhalers to the school. (One will be kept in Health Services as a back-up in case the other one malfunctions or is lost by the student, if the student is cleared to carry their own inhaler by his/her physician.)
- ❖ We cannot use drug samples unless the prescriber labels them according to the regulations of the New Mexico Board of Pharmacy.

**\*\*It is very important that you hand medications, supplements and supplies directly to the driver who picks up your child. Please do not pack them in your student's luggage or backpack. This is especially true for narcotic medication and growth hormone as they must be accounted for by the parent/guardian, driver, and nurse. Signatures are required on our accounting forms when these medications are sent to school and when any are returned home.**

- ❖ Transportation staff cannot administer medications to students unless authorized by the student's physician and approved by the Health Services Supervisor. (Some students are permitted to self-administer Insulin, Glucagon, Albuterol or Epinephrine if their doctor approves it and the doctor verifies that the child has been trained to self-administer.)
- ❖ Your child's nursing case manager will try to give you reminders when your child needs medication refills. **However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the child's parents to track refill dates and provide the school with an adequate supply of medication.** We can provide you with a tracking form upon request.

**Parents/guardians must provide the school with all of the equipment and supplies to care for their child (e.g., oxygen, suction machine, syringes, prescribed enteral feeding formulas, dressing supplies, etc.)**

**Financial responsibility for medical services (other than those received from the school doctor or nurse), medications, etc. will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian.** Parents/Guardians are required to reimburse NMSBVI for prescriptions filled here and for any co-pays related to insurance.

If your child is eligible for Medicaid or has other health care coverage, a copy of his/her card must be sent to Health Services where it will be on file, if needed, for medication and/or other medical services. If there is no record of insurance, NMSBVI will pay for prescriptions and then invoice the parent/guardian for reimbursement. Any other medical costs, such as emergency room visits, will be billed directly to the parent/guardian. It is the parent's responsibility to notify NMSBVI of any changes in their child's insurance coverage.

Parents/guardians who have children on continuing medications must send medication refills in a timely manner. **Students cannot remain at school without their prescribed medications.** Health Services staff will only do two (2) prescription pick-ups per student per year on prescriptions that should have been provided to the school by the student's family. For any additional prescription pick-ups, there will be a \$25 surcharge for the pharmacy pick-up that will be billed to the parent/guardian.

educational program /  
student services



## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, under the direction of the Board of Regents, is accredited by Cognia and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) and expanded through the addition of the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) and the New Mexico Public Education Department and is a residential/day school for students who are blind/visually impaired, including those with multiple impairments, of school age.

## **SCHOOL SUPPORT**

Tuition, transportation, meals, lodging, limited medical care, and limited educational materials are provided without cost to the parents of every child who is found eligible for attendance. Parents/Guardians are required to pay for clothing, personal expenses and medical costs.

## **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS and PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) afford parents/guardians and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. They are:

- a. The right to inspect and review the student’s educational records within forty-five (45) calendar days of the day the school receives a request for access.

Parents/Guardians or eligible students should submit to the school (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Special Education Director will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

- b. The right to request the amendment of the student’s educational records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading.

Requests should be made in writing to the Special Education Director and should clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why they feel it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or eligible student, the school will notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

- c. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person

serving on the Board of Regents; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent/guardian or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. [**NOTE:** FERPA requires a school district (school) to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent/guardian or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.]

- d. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:  
Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

## **DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES**

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team is responsible for determining whether the student has completed a planned program of study making him/her eligible to receive a diploma. Upon completion of a planned program of study that meets the following requirements, the student will be awarded a diploma. Students may be awarded a diploma by completing any of the following programs of study:

- a. A standard program of study is based upon meeting or surpassing all requirements for graduation under the New Mexico Standards of Excellence with or without reasonable modification of delivery and assessment methods. All services for students in a standard program of study end when the student receives a diploma.
- b. A modified program of study is based upon meeting the State Board of Education's Career Readiness Standards with Benchmarks as defined in the IEP with or without reasonable modifications of delivery and assessment methods. Students in career readiness programs may receive services until the age of 22.
- c. An Intensive Support Program of study is based upon meeting or surpassing IEP goals and objectives, with or without, reasonable modifications of delivery and assessment methods, referencing skill attainment at the student's ability level which may lead to meaningful employment. Students in Intensive Support programs are entitled to services through their 22<sup>nd</sup> year.

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

Students attending the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired are required to meet

standards for program completion for their prescribed course of study in order to earn a diploma. The prescribed course of study includes a minimum of credits in selected courses and/or evidence that the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) has satisfactorily met the student's needs and credit requirements.

***Graduation Requirements for Students on the Standard Program (24.5 credits):***

- Four credits in English (with major emphasis on grammar, nonfiction writing and literature).
- Four credits in Mathematics
- Three credits in Science (two of which shall have a laboratory component).
- Three- and one-half credits in Social Science, including: U.S. and World History and Geography, Government and Economics.
- One-half (.5) credit of New Mexico History.
- One unit in Physical Education.
- One-half (.5) credit of Health.
- One unit in one of the following: a career cluster course, workplace readiness or a language other than English.
- Seven and one-half (7.5) elective units that meet department content and performance standards.
- At least one of the units required for graduation shall be earned as an advanced placement or honors course, a dual-credit course offered in cooperation with an institution of higher education or a distance learning course.

Additional elective courses which have been specifically designed for students with visual impairments or blindness and which have been approved by the NMSBVI Board of Regents include all areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum.

In order to be eligible to graduate from NMSBVI, all Academic and Career option students must have successfully completed either a cottage or apartment (as deemed appropriate) living experience their senior year.

Braille instruction is available as an elective or a communication skills credit at NMSBVI and has been approved by the Board of Regents and the New Mexico Department of Education for high school credit. All students attending NMSBVI will have a current Learning Media Assessment. The Braille addendum will be discussed at each student's IEP meeting to determine the need for instruction and use of Braille. If the student's eye condition is degenerative and the student has the cognitive and tactual ability to become a Braille reader, Braille instruction will be a priority.

In order to obtain maximum benefit and skill mastery from the program, students may choose to spend from four (4) to six (6) years to complete their high school studies.

**STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS**

Quarterly report cards are mailed to parents/guardians following each nine-week period. Progress on IEP goals is reported quarterly.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

NMSBVI offers a robust educational program that meets the needs of a well-rounded student. This programming incorporates the core curriculum, expanded core curriculum and also addresses the

motor development and physical fitness needs of students. NMSBVI will offer physical education classes or adapted physical education classes to preschool and elementary age students as determined by the student's IEP team. NMSBVI will require a physical education or adapted physical education class for 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 1 year of high school, as determined by the student's IEP team. These courses will be fulfilled either in the public-school setting or on the NMSBVI campus as determined appropriate by the student's IEP team. NMSBVI will offer a physical education class or a 2-day a week fitness time for remaining years of middle and high school, as determined by the IEP team while also considering the core and expanded core curriculum needs of the student.

## **EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM**

What is known about students who are blind and visually impaired is that, unless skills such as orientation and mobility, social interaction, and independent living are learned, these students are at high risk for lonely, isolated, and unproductive lives.

The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) addresses these specific needs of children with blindness or visual impairment. The ECC includes:

### **Compensatory or Functional Academic Skills, Including Communication Modes**

Compensatory and functional skills include such learning experiences as concept development, spatial understanding, study and organizational skills, speaking and listening skills, and adaptations necessary for accessing all areas of the existing core curriculum. Children may use Braille, large print, print with the use of optical devices, regular print, tactile symbols, a calendar system, sign language, and/or recorded materials to communicate.

### **Social Interaction Skills**

Social interaction skills are not learned casually and incidentally by students who are blind or visually impaired as they are by sighted persons. Social skills must be carefully, consciously, and sequentially taught to students who are blind and visually impaired.

### **Recreation and Leisure Skills**

The teaching of recreation and leisure skills to students who are blind or visually impaired must be planned and deliberately taught, and should focus on the development of life-long skills.

### **Career Education**

Many of the skills and knowledge offered to all students through vocational education can be of value to students who are blind or visually impaired. They will not be sufficient, however, to prepare students for adult life, since such instruction assumes a basic knowledge of the world of work based on prior visual experiences. Career education in an expanded core curriculum will provide the visually impaired learner of all ages with opportunities to explore strengths and interests in a systematic, well-planned manner.

Because unemployment and underemployment have been the leading problem facing adults with a visual impairment in the United States, this portion of the expanded core curriculum is vital to students.

### **Assistive Technology**

Assistive Technology is a tool to unlock learning and expand the horizons of students.

Assistive Technology can be a great equalizer for students who are blind or visually impaired by enhancing communication and learning, as well as expanding knowledge of the world.

### **Sensory Efficiency Skills**

Through the use of thorough, systematic training, most students with remaining functional vision can be taught to better and more efficiently utilize their remaining vision. The responsibility for performing a functional vision assessment, planning appropriate learning activities for effective visual utilization, and instructing students in using their functional vision in effective and efficient ways is clearly an area of the expanded core curriculum.

### **Independent Living Skills (ILS)**

Opportunities for learning specific living skills and personal independence are provided to students through Independent Living Skills and experiences in residential dormitories. Students are involved in activities of independent living throughout the day whether it is dressing or vocational endeavors.

Areas of emphasis include the following:

- Personal grooming and hygiene, including daily bathing, care of teeth, and proper use of cosmetics and personal items.
- Clothing care, including folding and hanging clothes, orderliness in drawers and wardrobes, selection of appropriate clothing, laundry, and minor clothing repairs.
- General room-care, including making and changing beds, mopping floors, dusting.
- Foods and kitchen skills, including shopping and food preparation, menu planning, and personal eating skills.
- Use and care of personal possessions and school property.
- Earning and spending money for goods.
- Personal management and organization.

**Cottage/Apartment Living Experience:** As Expanded Core Curriculum is a central focus during a student's time at NMSBVI, a demonstration of proficient independent living skills is essential to preparing a student for post-graduation life. In order to be eligible to graduate from NMSBVI, all Academic and Career option students must have successfully completed either a cottage or apartment (as deemed appropriate) living experience their senior year. If extenuating circumstances make completing this requirement impossible, student must have written exemption from NMSBVI Superintendent to be allowed to graduate from NMSBVI without meeting this requirement.

### **Orientation and Mobility (Independent Travel)**

Independent movement is critical for all children with visual impairments. Students are expected to travel with the greatest possible degree of independence, assuming responsibility for their personal safety while on campus or while engaged in school-sponsored activities off campus.

All students will undergo an Orientation & Mobility assessment upon arrival at NMSBVI.

- a. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team will consider current orientation/mobility assessments, as well as cognitive, psychological, orthopedic, neurological, and other assessments in determining which students need to use a mobility device to safely navigate the constantly changing obstacles, elevations,

textures, and lighting conditions that will be encountered both on and off campus.

- b. Orientation & Mobility goals will be determined during the IEP process. However, specific goals will be determined in consideration of the following precepts:
1. Orientation & Mobility training will be provided so as to achieve maximum safety and independence in all environments and under all lighting conditions typically encountered on and off-campus.
  2. Orientation & Mobility training will be provided with the expectation that students are responsible for their own personal safety at all times, both on and off-campus.
  3. Orientation & Mobility training will be provided with an emphasis on comprehensive skill building/problem solving in preference to route memorization.
  4. The ultimate goal of Orientation & Mobility training is to train students to function, to the highest degree possible, as fully independent, self-sufficient individuals, capable of navigating their environment independently, with safety, skill, confidence, and grace.
  5. Students determined to need a mobility device for independent travel will do so as follows:
    - (a) Students are required to use their canes on campus at all times with the exception of their dormitory room.
    - (b) Human guide is not considered to be independent mobility, and shall be used only in rare circumstances, such as emergency medical situations, adverse weather conditions, construction areas, high noise environments, and the like. In such circumstances, human guide will be used as a supplement to the mobility device, not as a substitute for the mobility device.

### **Self-Determination**

This area of the ECC highlights the importance of believing in one's self, while understanding one's abilities and limitations. Self-determination is the ability for people to control their lives, reach goals they have set and take part fully in the world around them.

<b>LIBRARY</b>
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Students are encouraged to use and enjoy the NMSBVI Library, which maintains a collection of learning materials that support the school's curriculum. The collection also includes basic reference tools and selections of general interest. Materials are available in a variety of formats, including regular print, Braille, large print, audio recordings, video and CD-ROM. Assistive devices (such as the Kurzweil Personal Reader, closed-circuit television enlargement systems and speech access software and hardware for computers) are also available. The Library is open during school hours on scheduled school days. Additional access to the library during evening hours must be arranged ahead of time with the library supervisor and must be supervised by authorized NMSBVI staff.

Students are allowed to check out up to five (5) books/materials at a time for a three (3)-week period. If a student continuously fails to return library materials, library privileges may be restricted. All library books/materials checked out by students must be accounted for by the Librarian four weeks prior to the winter break and the summer break. In the case of damage to or loss of library items, restitution may include the cost of replacement/repair or community service and will be charged to the individual borrowing the item.

### **GUIDELINES FOR OVERNIGHT TRIPS**

- a. Staff will provide supervision for every student at all times, despite the fact they may have reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- b. Students will follow all NMSBVI School Rules/Regulations for Conduct.
- c. Staff will occupy adjoining hotel/motel rooms to all students to provide supervision, room checks and to ensure safety, if possible. If not possible, staff will occupy hotel/motel rooms that are in close proximity to all students. Room checks will be conducted periodically.
- d. Staff will be seated with students during every phase of transportation. When using NMSBVI vehicles or rental cars, one staff will serve as the designated driver while remaining staff sit with the students.

### **LOCKERS**

Lockers will be issued to secondary students. The school is not responsible for valuables or books that disappear from lockers. School personnel have the authority to inspect any locker and its contents at any time.

Should a student choose to use a lock on their assigned locker, the student must supply either a duplicate key or the combination, whichever is appropriate, to the School Office.

### **USING SCHOOL EQUIPMENT AT HOME**

Students may be approved to take special equipment, books, and/or musical instruments to their homes during major vacations or during summer months. Checking out such items will require completion of an NMSBVI Equipment Loan form with parent and student signature. If items are lost or damaged, restitution may include the cost of replacement or repair and will be charged to the individual borrowing the item.

### **MANDT SYSTEM**

The Mandt System for co-managing student behavior has been approved by the Board of Regents for use by staff at NMSBVI. Mandt is a systematic training program designed to help staff reduce the potential for verbal and physical abuse to themselves as well as co-workers and students. The system encourages and teaches the use of a graded system of ten (10) alternatives ranging from philosophy and attitude (least restrictive) to therapeutic restraint (most restrictive). The system is based upon the principle that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Training is provided to staff on a regular schedule for either initial certification or re-certification.

### **STUDENTS TRAVELING HOME WITH OTHER STUDENTS FOR THE WEEKEND**

The NMSBVI Transportation Department brings students to a designated drop off point each week. Should a student be spending time with another student over a weekend, they will need to be transported by the parent from the designated drop off location to the desired location. NMSBVI does not transport to another student's home.

- If you have any questions, call the Transportation Manager, (575) 430-7396.

### **TRANSCRIPTS OF CREDITS**

In order to be considered official, transcripts of credits must be received or sent by mail. All transcripts requested by schools and colleges will be sent free of charge. Seniors who wish to have a final transcript sent to a college must file a request for this transcript with the School Office.

### **TRANSITION SERVICES**

Transition Services are provided by a Transition Coordinator. At age fourteen (14), each student, often together with the parent/guardian, is asked to begin thinking of post-school goals in the areas of education, vocation, residential, community involvement, and leisure activities. These goals are then taken into consideration in curriculum planning, scheduling of related services, and needed outside agency networking. Together, these areas will contribute toward an individualized transition plan for each student that is designed to relevantly link education and services with future goals.

residential services



## **GOAL STATEMENT**

The goal of the Residential Life program is to support educational programming while simultaneously serving as a home away from home for residential students.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Students attending the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired who do not live in Alamogordo may reside in the dormitory setting. Each wing of each dorm includes a kitchen, living room, laundry room, computers, television, Braille writer, and some toys for younger students. Student rooms feature beds, dressers, desks and closets.

Students are encouraged to bring items from home to place in their rooms to make them more personal. Many students bring CDs, MP3s, IPODs, and other personal electronic devices. It is important to mark (using a permanent marker or etching tool) these items, including initials or name on individual CDs.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

It is important that the Residential Life Setting be an environment of comfort, enjoyment, and mutual respect for all.

- Students are encouraged to gather in the commons area to socialize. Students are NOT allowed to hang out in hallways or each other's rooms.
- To protect student privacy, only students and relevant NMSBVI staff are permitted in dorm rooms and the hallways with the exception of the first and last day to set up, and during special occasions or exceptions as approved by the Residential Life Supervisor.
- Staff may enter dorm rooms to monitor and assist students, monitor room for cleanliness or vandalism, or to look for banned or stolen items. Staff will make every reasonable effort to respect the privacy of the student.
- No food or drinks in the rooms at any time. Students can store any snacks that they bring in kitchen cabinets. Other students are not allowed to eat snacks labeled as belonging to another without permission from the owner.
- Items prohibited in dorms: alcohol, any type of medications (except those noted in policy 524) tobacco products, knives, guns, weapons, lighters and matches, pornography, curtains.
- To prevent accusations of theft, students are not permitted to borrow, lend, sell or buy items from one another.
- It is expected that students will treat everyone with respect. This is expected in all interactions, volume and tone of voice, and in helping to maintain a clean living space.
- Yelling, roughhousing, and running in dorm is not permitted.
- Bedtime for younger students is 8:30pm, older students must be in bedrooms with lights out by 10pm. No electronics or phones are to be used after 10pm. If students are caught using electronics after bedtime, it will be dealt with as outlined in student handbook.
- No snacks after 8:30pm or on travel days (unless instructed by nutritionist).
- Last loads of laundry may be put in at 8:30pm and MUST be completed by 10pm. Students will not be allowed in laundry room after 10pm.
- Although socializing is encouraged, the boys and girls should be on their own sides of the dorm by 8:30pm. This is to ensure rest of the younger students and preparation for bed or to finish any dorm chores.
- Students will not go off-campus after 8pm. Students should be back on campus by 8pm unless approved by Residential Life Supervisor.



one dress outfit  
at least 7 sets of underwear/socks  
shoes

bathrobe  
winter coat (sent no later than October)  
swimsuit

The following is a required list of personal items. Consumable items such as toothpaste must be promptly replaced when depleted.

2 tubes of toothpaste  
toothbrush  
2 bottles of body wash and/or soap  
tissues  
sanitary supplies (girls--older)  
2 towels

2 bottles of shampoo and conditioner  
2 sticks/bottles of deodorant  
nail clippers  
hair brush and/or comb  
electric razor (boys—older)/OPTIONAL  
2 washcloths and/or scrubbers

Students who are not toilet trained will require a minimum of ten (10) outfits and enough diapers on hand at all times to make it through at least two (2) weeks.

### PHONE USE IN THE DORM

NMSBVI is committed to helping families stay in touch while students are in Alamogordo and to ensuring that students have every opportunity for success. This requires minimizing disruptions in student routines, including establishing and maintaining healthy sleep patterns. The following practice balances those two competing needs.

Students may make and receive telephone calls at the (800) 437-3505, number. Should there be more demand for the phones than supplied; phone calls may be limited to twenty (20) minutes.

Use of dorm phones will be aligned with a student's assigned bed time.

- No phone calls will be initiated by a student any later than fifteen (15) minutes prior to their bed time. If a call is initiated prior to fifteen (15) minutes before their bedtime, the call will be completed at bed time.
- No phone calls will be received by a student after their bed time. If a call comes in for a student, dorm staff will take a message for the student to include the name and number of the person calling. Phone calls that are obviously an emergency will be taken by the student.
- Morning phone calls must occur at a reasonable time to allow for the student to prepare for the day.
- Morning phone calls will not be received by students prior to 6:55 a.m. If a call is received prior to that time, all callers will be requested to call back at 6:55 a.m. All morning calls must be completed by 7:10 a.m. so that student can leave for breakfast.

**Cell Phones** – cell phone usage by students in the dorm must be reasonable and not interfere with chores, homework, preparation for the next day, or sleeping.

- Cell phones should be turned off and put away by assigned bedtimes each school night. Emergency phone calls after these hours should be dialed into the dorm phone and handled by dorm staff.
- Cell phones will not be used during the time that a student is doing homework or performing any living skills tasks while in the dorm. This includes preparing a meal, doing laundry, cleaning of room, etc. Students can respond to the voicemails they receive when their chores are completed.

- If a student is using their cell phone improperly (talking on the phone while doing chores, texting or calling after they are supposed to be sleeping, while doing homework, etc.) their cell phone will be temporarily confiscated until their assigned task (chores, sleeping, homework, etc.) is completed. A second offense may result in the phone being held by dorm staff until Friday morning and then returned to the student.
- Residential Life Staff may not monitor a student's phone call including speaker, the nature of the conversation or the time of call.
- Students are prohibited to use their cell phone to take pictures of staff or other students without that person's permission.
- Students are not allowed to use their cell phone (on or off campus) to harass or bully.
- See also NMSBVI guidelines on cell phone use under Student Conduct page 28.

### **MONEY / STUDENT ACCOUNTS / ATM CARDS & PRE-PAID CREDIT CARDS**

The safest option for students in terms of keeping cash secure on campus is a student account.

- You may use cash or check (made payable to NMSBVI Student Account) to start or contribute to an account.
- The student then deposits the check into their account with the student trust custodian.
- To withdraw money, a student makes out a withdrawal form, gets an approval signature from Program Coordinator, Principal or Residential Life Supervisor, and then takes the form to the student trust custodian.
- A student may withdraw up to \$50 in one week. The money is available immediately.
- If a student requests more than \$50, the request will be processed in the next check run and the student will receive a check in the amount requested.
- To ensure accountability, NMSBVI retains copies of all student transactions.

You may also provide your child with an ATM/Debit card or pre-paid credit cards. At least two (2) banks in Alamogordo (Wells Fargo and First Federal) have talking ATM machines.

### **STUDENT PRIVACY AND PERSONAL POSSESSIONS**

To the greatest extent possible, access to each student room will be limited to that student. Students are encouraged to spend time together in common areas of the dorm or on campus. Residential Life Staff enter student's rooms primarily to assist the student. Contents in desks, lockers, and rooms assigned to students are subject to inspection at any time for cleanliness, missing property, banned items, and evidence of vandalism or theft.

To protect student privacy, only students and relevant NMSBVI staff are permitted in dorm rooms and the hallways of the dorms. The only exceptions to this are the first and last days of the school year, in which parents/guardians will be allowed in the hallways and student dorm rooms in order to help students set-up or pack-up their rooms. Students are welcome to visit with family in the common areas of the dorm (such as the living room) or outside on campus.

Personal possessions are not confiscated by Residential Life Staff unless the items are banned by the school (such as drugs or weapons), when a personal possession is used in violation of school rules (ex: cell phones during homework), or as part of disciplinary consequence in coordination with parents.

While NMSBVI allows students to bring their personal items, NMSBVI is not responsible for lost,

stolen, or damaged items. NMSBVI will provide a lockbox to stay in student's rooms as a courtesy, but the student remains responsible for maintaining items in the lockbox and keeping their code secure and private.

### **OBLIGATIONS AND EVENING OPTIONS**

Students have a number of obligations in the dorm. Clothing management (washing, drying, folding, putting away, etc.), taking care of personal hygiene (showering, washing hair, brushing teeth, etc.) and room organization (making bed, putting things where they belong, etc.) are the primary chores and are typically done in the evenings during the week. Each student has a set day of the week and time to do laundry and, depending on student need, some students have set shower times.

Students have the opportunity, once their dorm obligations are met and/or scheduled, to play and/or relax in the Recreation Center and/or the gym. The Rec. Center also has access to both bikes and rollerblading equipment. While students must wear protective equipment (helmet, knee pads, gloves, etc.) and the Residential Life Staff monitor students closely, it is important to realize that bumps and bruises are a part of childhood.

### **ON-CAMPUS TRAVEL**

Students who have demonstrated the maturity and O&M skills necessary for independent travel around campus are generally permitted to move around campus without direct supervision. However, there are times when the Residential Life Staff will require students to travel together and/or with a member of the Residential Life Staff.

Unless specifically designated by an IEP team as a student who does not need a cane, students are required to have and make proper use of white canes while on campus. Students who choose not to use canes (and use them appropriately) are subject to disciplinary measures.

### **OFF-CAMPUS TRAVEL**

All students are encouraged to socialize with peers in the campus setting.

- Students are allowed to leave campus with an adult in moderation but time off campus cannot interfere with student completion of homework or participation in Residential Life programming to teach skills.
- Students who are under 18 or who have a guardian must have permission from a parent or guardian to leave campus.
- Students over 18, who are their own guardian, will follow the guidelines set forth for off campus travel and will sign appropriate waivers.



# transportation services



## STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

Students travel home on designated weekends as indicated in the Transportation Travel Calendar. Each NMSBVI transportation vehicle will have two (2) drivers. Drivers have pertinent student information with them as they travel, such as Student Information Update documents, the Parent's/Guardian's Authorization to Treat, Restrictions, Precautions and Allergy List, and the list of people to whom the student may be released at travel destinations.

**All travel-related communication should be made directly with the Transportation Manager (575) 430-7396.**

Students leave campus on travel days by 12:30 p.m. and arrive at their designated pick-up point usually by 6:00 p.m. Return trips to campus begin at pre-designated times at the return origination, arriving at the NMSBVI campus usually by 6:00 p.m. When transportation arrives with your student or arrives for pick-up of your student, please allow a few extra minutes to communicate with the driver and receive or give any medications, pertinent documentation, etc. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to bring student to/from the transportation vehicle upon arrival at student's destination.

### **IMPORTANT:**

- **If a parent/guardian is not at the pick-up point at the designated time, Transportation will attempt to contact the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted by the completion of travel, the student will be brought back to the NMSBVI campus or taken to the law enforcement agency in the pick-up city.**
- It is the **parents'/guardians' responsibility** to insure Transportation has current contact addresses and telephone numbers in case contact needs to be made while traveling.
- Prescribed medications **MUST** accompany your student. **Your student may not return to school without their proper medication.** All documents required by Health Services to have a signature must be signed before your student may board NMSBVI Transportation.
- Please give Transportation twelve (12) hours notification if your student is not returning to school on the return travel day by calling the Transportation Manager at (575) 430-7396.
- If the student does not return to school on the scheduled travel day due to illness or medical reasons, the parent/guardian will be responsible for transportation back to school.
- Special trips provided by transportation are limited to one (1) occurrence per semester. Trips must be a necessity (ex. Doctor's appointment) and must be approved by the Transportation Manager and Principal.
  - Feeder mileage compensation will be paid for regular transportation days as listed in the transportation calendar. Compensation minus any outstanding fees accrued through other departments will be paid to parents/guardians on a monthly basis via check. Checks will be issued and mailed to address on file within fourteen (14) business days of receipt of all required documentation. Feeder mileage is defined by NMSBVI, Policy 620:
  - Alamogordo Day Students: Students whose home school district is within a fifty (50) mile radius of NMSBVI's Alamogordo campus can enroll as day students. Parents/guardians will be eligible for feeder mileage compensation round trip, per

- day if they live more than ten (10), but less than fifty (50) miles from NMSBVI.
- Alamogordo Residential Students: Parents/guardians of students placed on the Alamogordo campus as residential students are eligible for feeder mileage compensation round trip, from the family home of record to the designated transportation drop off/pick up location nearest the family home if the distance between the two is more than ten (10) miles.
- During on-campus weekends, transportation will not be provided home for residential students.

### **Release of Students to Authorized Person**

Students **will not** be released to anyone except the parent/guardian or those designated on the school enrollment form unless **written** authorization is obtained from the parent/guardian. For safety reasons, parents/guardians or their designees will be asked to show identification when receiving the student if the driver does not know the person receiving the student.

### **Transportation Cancellation or Delay**

If travel is considered unsafe due to weather conditions, the transportation department will notify the parent/guardian. If a delay is caused by any other unforeseen circumstances, notification will be made if the delay is in excess of thirty (30) minutes. Parents/guardians may call the Transportation Manager at (575) 430-7396, for travel updates.

**REMEMBER** – due to possible cancellations/delays arising, it is imperative that Transportation have current contact information for each student. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to update contact information with Transportation Manager (575) 430-7396.

<b>LUGGAGE AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS</b>
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All luggage must be clearly marked and tagged with the student's name, telephone number and home address. Luggage not marked **will not** be placed on transportation for travel until properly marked and tagged.

In addition, NMSBVI **will not** be held responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items. Any personal belongings brought on to NMSBVI vehicles are the responsibility of the student. Parents/Guardians have the option of having belongings or money controlled by the driver/caregiver. All items must be clearly identified and given to the driver/caregiver with a letter giving authorization for the driver/caregiver to be in possession of the items as well as instructions as to what is to be done with the items upon arrival at NMSBVI.

<b>SUPERVISION AND DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES</b>
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- Students shall follow directions of the driver the first time given.
- Students shall be prepared for pick-up at the predesigned pick-up location prior to arrival of transportation staff.
- Students are to avoid horseplay in vehicle that may distract driver.
- Students shall remain seated and keep aisles and exits clear.
- Students shall exhibit appropriate classroom conduct at all times while on transportation vehicles.

- Students are prohibited from the use of profane language, obscene gestures, tobacco, alcohol, drugs or any other controlled substance while on transportation vehicles.
- Students shall only be allowed to eat or drink school provided snacks and drinks while on transportation vehicles.
- Sunflower seeds, pistachios, and any other shelled seed or nut are not allowed in transportation vehicles.
- Students shall respect the rights and safety of others.
- Students shall not extend head, arms or objects out of the bus or suburban windows.

### **MOVIES ON TRANSPORTATION**

All buses and suburbans are equipped with DVD players; only movies rated G, PG, and PG-13 will be shown. Only one PG-13 movie will be shown per trip. Students under age thirteen (13) or without parent permission to view PG-13 movies will be provided an alternative entertainment such as books on tape or digital books with headphones, or use of personal video devices with headphones.







**NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

ALAMOGORDO • ALBUQUERQUE • STATEWIDE OUTREACH

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SUMMER 2022