

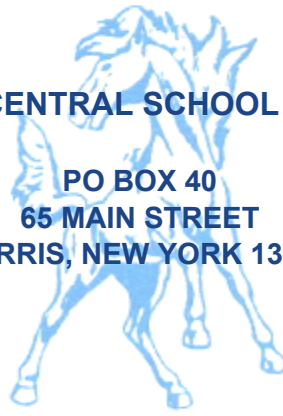
BOARD OF
EDUCATION
MARY DUGAN
President
RUSSELL TILLEY
Vice President
EMILY BOSS
THERESA DeLAURENTIIS
WENDY MOORE

MORRIS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PO BOX 40
65 MAIN STREET
MORRIS, NEW YORK 13808

ADMINISTRATION
JAMIE MAISTROS
Superintendent

APRIL VUNK
Principal



September 25, 2024

What a busy week! Amid our VIP lunch, spirit days, pep rally, and Homecoming, we want to take a moment to address concerns raised regarding student discipline. As educators committed to the success of every child, we take all student, family, and community concerns seriously, using these opportunities to review our policies and processes.

Please remember that student discipline is a private, confidential matter that we cannot, by law, discuss with the press, non-custodial guardians, or the community. While we understand this makes it difficult to present the full perspective, we also value our students' legally guaranteed privacy as they work to become their best selves.

It is important to us that all learners feel welcome, safe, and supported at MCS. Many of our staff are parents and we understand how hard it can be to watch your child struggle at school. Though there are countless bright spots that make MCS a wonderful place to learn and grow, but there are always opportunities for growth and improvement. We are actively working to strengthen relationships as part of our commitment to safe schools, and we have implemented the following measures to support this effort:

- **Whole Child Approach:** Our district continues to use evidence-based, state-recommended restorative practices when addressing conflict. These practices focus on developing lifelong skills such as emotional recognition, self-control, awareness of others, building positive relationships, and responsible decision-making, all proven to reduce bullying. Additionally, we've implemented a school supply cabinet and are working on addressing food and hygiene insecurities. In many instances, poor behavior is a child's way of communicating a deeper need, and by collaborating with families to address these underlying inequities, we create more space for learning and growth.
- **Increased Adult Presence:** We believe adult presence is a powerful deterrent to negative interactions. As such, we have strategically positioned staff in high-traffic areas to minimize potential conflicts.
- **Bullying Prevention Strategies:** This year, our staff are focused on increasing students' sense of belonging by fostering empathy, positive relationships, and a shared responsibility for the well-being of all. This proactive approach helps create a positive, inclusive environment, reducing instances of harassment, intimidation, and bullying. We have invited Opportunities for Otsego to address specific social-emotional learning standards, have counselors pushing into classrooms for social-emotional instruction, and are working to create more opportunities for parent involvement during the school day. Additionally, we ask that students and families contact our counselors and principal to report unresolved bullying. The DASA bullying report form is available under the students tab of our website.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to reflect on our practices and identify areas where we can best serve our students. With your continued partnership, communication, and support, we hope to exemplify the caring, strong, rural community school that MCS is known for.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JMaistros', is written over a thin horizontal line.

Ms. Jamie Maistros
Superintendent