



Mills River
Seventh-day Adventist School
Handbook

"Turning Students into Spiritual Leaders"

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EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

We, as Seventh-day Adventists, believe in the education of the whole person. Education is not limited to the mere development of the intellect. Furthermore, this educational process is a continuing experience throughout the life of the individual. The home, the school, the church and the community participate in this process of education.

The primary goal of our school is to prepare students for useful work on earth and a home in heaven by teaching them to accept Christ as their personal Savior, to allow the Holy Spirit to transform their lives, and to fulfill Christ's commission of preaching the gospel to the entire world.

Our objectives of Adventist Christian education are:

- To provide each student with opportunities for high scholastic achievement.
- To encourage each student to recognize and appreciate God as the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of all life: Teaching and demonstrating that the Christian life is the happiest way of life; showing love, concern, and compassion for all people, and persuading students that the best way to lead is by example.
- To remember that our bodies are the temples of God and learn to live healthy lives.

MISSION STATEMENT

"We follow Jesus' example by nurturing each child's growth as a whole person: academically, physically, spiritually, and socially."

ADMISSIONS

This school is open to all persons who possess a good moral character and demonstrate both reverence and a willingness to wholeheartedly observe all the regulations of the school. Membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not required, but it is understood that everyone who is accepted thereby pledges to observe the regulations of the school and respect the standards and ideals of the denomination.

Seventh-day Adventist schools have not been established for the purpose of offering special education; therefore, they are unable to accept students who have serious physical, scholastic, or behavioral problems.

Trial Status

We wish each student to have a successful experience at Mills River Seventh-day Adventist School. Therefore, we are careful with whom we accept into our student body. Each new student will be placed on trial status for the first nine weeks they are in attendance. At the conclusion of the nine-week period the student will be placed on regular status unless parents are otherwise notified. If a student needs to stay on a trial

status the parents will be notified and an action plan will be drawn up to clarify and correct any problem. If the necessary adjustments have not been made, the parent will be asked to withdraw their child. Mills River Seventh-day Adventist School admits students of any race, nationality and ethnicity to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Furthermore, this institution does not discriminate on the basis of race, nationality or ethnicity. In order to ensure the best educational environment, prospective students may be screened through testing, recommendation forms, and staff evaluations. The criteria include student conduct, motivation, scholastics, and parental support.

Students entering Pre-k must be four years old on or before August 15, students entering Kindergarten must be 5 years old on or before August 15, and students entering first grade must be 6 years old. All students must be toilet trained.

APPLICATION

All pupils enrolling at Mills River Seventh-day Adventist School for the first time must furnish:

1. Completed application form with application fee
2. Computer internet use contract
3. Photo authorization & Handbook agreement
4. Emergency consent to treat
5. Financial agreement
6. Approved drivers form
7. Cell phone/Smart watch agreement
8. Volunteer sign-up
9. Volunteer driver questionnaire
10. Medication & Allergy form
11. Current record of up-to-date immunizations
12. Homeschool student insurance (homeschool students only)
13. Student recommendation form (new students entering 3rd-8th grades)
14. Record request with previous school's address and phone number
15. Current physical examination by a licensed physician (by September 15)
16. Copy of birth certificate

Grade placement for students transferring from home school may be dependent upon the results of a standardized placement test as well as subsequent testing and review by the staff. All students' records must be received prior to their start date in school.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

An earnest effort has been put forth to keep the cost of tuition as low as possible so that all may have the opportunity of a Christian education.

1. Financial Responsibility: The individual who signs the Financial Agreement is the person responsible for all financial obligations.

2. Entrance Fee Policy: The entrance fee and first month's tuition are due at registration, or prior to the enrollment of a student once the school year has begun. To register for the new school year, your account needs to be current with the school. The registration fee is non-refundable.

3. Scholarships: Each additional student in the same immediate family will receive a sibling scholarship.

4. Opportunity Scholarship: Information to apply for funding through the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA) can be found by going to <https://k12.ncseaa.edu/opportunity-scholarship/> and filling out an application. You will select Mills River SDA School when prompted to choose a school. Funding is granted by NCSEAA through four tiers depending on family household size and income level. Each family must renew their student(s) every year to receive this scholarship.

4. Tuition Payment Policy: The entrance fee and first month's tuition are due at registration, and nine monthly payments thereafter are due by the tenth of each month, from September through May, for a total of ten monthly tuition payments.

5. Satisfactory Arrangements: Student accounts must be kept current in order to continue to attend Mills River Seventh-day Adventist School. If you are unable to pay your account balance in full by the tenth of each month, August through May, satisfactory arrangements must be made by the tenth. Your payment plan will be taken to the school board to be reviewed. Accounts that fall behind more than a month may result in your child being removed from classes until a payment arrangement is resolved.

6. Worthy Student Financial Aid: You may apply to the local church board for financial aid. Aid may or may not be given based on each individual case and availability of funds.

7. Return Check Fees: There will be a \$35 service charge on all returned checks. Financial forms with updated tuition, registration fees, and payment information are available on an individual basis by meeting with the school treasurer and also at summer registration.

RECORDS AND TRANSCRIPTS

Final report cards and school records will not be released until the school bill is paid or satisfactory arrangements have been made.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The school administration maintains strict confidentiality of student academic records, discipline issues, or of financial records in the following manner:

- All student records are kept in locked files.
- Discipline issues are reported to the parents of the involved students only and not to the general student body or to other parents.
- If it becomes necessary to take such issues beyond the teacher, principal, and parent, it is handled by the school board.

SCHOOL HOURS

Monday – Thursday 8:15 A.M.- 3:15 P.M.

Friday – 8:15 A.M. – 2:15 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

Students at Mills River Seventh-day Adventist School are to be present and on time for all classes, activities, and appointments. Regular attendance develops patterns of behavior essential to professional and personal success in life. Parents or legal guardians have the responsibility for ensuring that students attend and remain at school daily. Numerous studies link attendance with student achievement, therefore increased student attendance will result in improved student achievement.

Late arrivals to school and early departures from school will need to be signed-in/signed out at the front office by parents/guardians.

Absences: If a student misses more than six days of class in a quarter, school administration, in conjunction with the student's classroom teacher, will work together to determine the time constraints for making up missed work.

Procedure to have an absence or tardy recorded as excused: If a student has been absent or tardy, to have it reviewed by school administration for possible change to be excused, a parent must communicate with school administration *in writing upon return to school* giving the reason for absence. If communication is not received, the absence/tardy will be recorded as unexcused.

Five (5) unexcused tardies—A letter will be sent by school administration to alert parents.

Seven (7) unexcused tardies—A meeting with the principal-and parents will be scheduled.

Ten (10) unexcused tardies—Parents will be required to come before the Mills River SDA School Board to discuss a plan of action.

Excused Absences or Tardies:

The following reasons for pupil absences, tardiness, and early departure shall be considered by this policy to be excused:

- Personal illness, doctor/dentist, physical therapy and/or hospital appointment
- Extended illness (three consecutive days or more) or chronic health condition as documented by a parent's or physician's note. Illness less than five consecutive days with a note from parent or chronic health condition more than five days documented by a physician's note.
- Out of town family illness (on case-by-case basis)
- Death in the immediate family
- In-school disciplinary actions
- Religious observance (holidays only)
- Required court appearance with note from court
- Military obligations
- School-sponsored trips, activities, or athletic events

All medical excuses written by the doctor shall be submitted within **48 hours** of the student's return to school in order to be considered an excused absence. Otherwise, they will remain unexcused absences.

Student Release During School Hours

Dismissal during school hours must be authorized by school administration. The following procedure will help guarantee accountability of all students during the regular school hours:

1. If, for some reason a child must leave school early, the parent must do their best to communicate with their child's teacher well in advance. The parent will be expected to come into the front office to sign their child out.
2. Parents must report to the school office or administration.
3. Students may only leave school premises with a driver listed on the Approved Driver's form.

Notification of Excessive Absences

The State of North Carolina requires that every student in the state between the ages of seven (or younger if enrolled) and sixteen years attend school. The Compulsory Attendance Law requires that the school notify parents of excessive absences under the following conditions:

After six unexcused absences, the principal shall notify the parent/guardian of the student's excessive number of unlawful absences from school. The notification to the parent shall be by mail and shall state that the parent/guardian is in violation of the North Carolina Compulsory Attendance Law and may be prosecuted if the absences cannot be justified under the attendance policies (G.S. 115 C-378).

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

No before or after school care will be provided at the school. No student should arrive at school before 7:45 a.m. unless specific arrangements have been made with school administration. At the end of the school day, parents are requested to wait outside of the classroom until the teacher opens the door for dismissal.

WEATHER BULLETINS

School administration will notify parents of school cancellations or delays through texts and emails. Texts and calls come through Calling Post and emails through the school-wide email. Depending on your phone carrier, you may need to opt in by texting "Y" or "Yes" to 24251 in order to receive these texts.

HEALTH HYGIENE

Personal hygiene is necessary for a student's total well-being. Daily bathing, clean clothes, well-groomed hair, clean fingernails, brushed teeth, and a good breakfast are all essential to a child's success. Each child should have between eight and ten hours of sleep a night in order to do his/her best work.

Breakfast

It is important that your child eats a healthy breakfast. Studies show that students that eat a nutritional breakfast have a better opportunity to do their best in school.

Diet

Since we believe and teach that our bodies are the temples of God, we feel we are responsible to care for them in the best possible way. We *require* that all caffeine beverages and unclean meats be excluded from lunches. As stated in Leviticus 11, unclean meats include: pepperoni, ham, pork, bacon, shellfish of any kind, or fish without scales. We *request* that no soft drinks at all be sent to school. By minimizing products that contain large amounts of sugar, including soft drinks, you may greatly increase the concentration level of your student in the classroom. Except in case of emergency, students will not share lunches.

MEDICATIONS

Where possible, medications should be given at home by the parents. If a child needs medication at school, it should be turned in to the office so it can be stored in the locked medication cabinet (this includes over-the-counter medication).

The following policy has been developed to ensure safe storage and distribution of medication during school and aftercare hours:

- Students will not be allowed to keep medications of any type, including over-the-counter medications in their desk, locker, or book bag.
- All medications must be in their original container with a childproof cap. Parents are responsible for ensuring that medication is not expired.
- A signed consent form will be required in order for any medication to be taken or administered. ***This form must be signed by the parent stating the days and dosage the medication is to be taken.***
- Medications will be logged on the consent form as soon as they are taken, and the staff member will sign for each dose. A copy will be provided to the parents upon request. The original form will be retained in the school office.
- For a medication which must be given on a daily, continuous basis, the parent must complete a **Daily Medication Log** which states the name of the medication, time to be given, and amount. Each day the medication is given the staff responsible will sign their name with the time and dosage as specified on the medication log. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide notification if the administration parameters change. It is also the responsibility of the parent to be aware and provide medication refills when needed. Any equipment or other necessary items to administer the medication must be provided by the parent.

Whenever possible, we ask that parents request that their children's physician prescribe medications that do not require doses during school hours.

Epi-pens and Inhalers

Once a parent has given school administration an Epi-pen or inhaler, it will then be given to their child's teacher. The teacher will be expected to have the device at the ready at all times.

Allergies

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to notify the school administration of any known allergies.

ILLNESS

Fevers:

- A temperature of 99.5 degrees shall constitute a fever.
- Students who spike a fever at school will be sent home.
- Students who spike a fever at home must be kept home until they are fever-free for 24 hours. Students should not be sent to school having run a fever the previous night and given medications that morning.
- Students must be fever free, without medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.

If a student vomits at school they will be sent home. Students should be kept at home for 24 hours from the last time they vomited.

Any student with vomiting, a fever, pinkeye, or with lice will be sent home immediately. In the case of pinkeye or strep, the student may return twenty-four hours after the first dose of antibiotics or as allowed by a physician.

At any time during the school year, the principal or teachers may inspect any student for head lice. If nits or lice are identified during inspection, the student will be removed from the classroom and their parents or guardian will be called to come to the school to pick up the student. There is no specific exclusion time from school for head lice. Some parents are able to accomplish the initial lice treatment in one day. It should not take more than a few days. In order for a student to return back to school, they must be nit free.

After the student has been cleared to return to class, the principal will continue to check for nits because of the risk of re-infestation. The student will be checked by school administration or teacher as often as deemed necessary to ensure that the lice are absent.

STATEMENT OF ASBESTOS

No asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM) were used in the original construction of the school building. No modifications or additions have been made since the original construction using ACBM.

Parents, teachers, and other building occupants are hereby notified that the accredited inspector's statement of no ACBM is on file in the school office. This

statement is available for inspection as required per Sections 763.84© and 763(g)(4) of the AHERA regulations.

SCHOOL INSURANCE

Student accident insurance is considered secondary coverage as it provides for minimal payments only after the family insurance coverage is expended, or if there is no other primary insurance coverage. Coverage is for most inconsequential injuries incurred while in attendance at school. It does not cover medical expenses incurred by causes other than accidents and is insufficient for major accident expenses. These situations must be paid by the parents or sponsors and/or the family's insurance policy. A student accident report must be filed when the accident occurs to receive benefits. Homeschool students will fill out the Homeschool Insurance Form and pay a one-time fee at the beginning of the school year—this fee is covered within the Opportunity Scholarship funding. Non-OS families must pay the fee at registration.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum, at all levels, reflects the philosophy and objectives of Seventh-day Adventist education. It incorporates an awareness of the principles of human growth and development, encouraging, guiding and sustaining the students as they seek to understand themselves and to relate to their fellow human beings and to their Creator. The textbooks and course material used throughout the school are in compliance with the recommendations of the Office of Education for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which is the central coordination office for all schools operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church throughout the world.

Subjects offered at Mills River Seventh-day Adventist School include: Bible, Reading, Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies/History, Art, Music, Choir, Physical Education, Spanish and computer skills.

Progress Reports

The school year is divided into four quarters or grading periods. Two quarters make up one semester. Progress reports will be issued at the end of each quarter. Grades will be reported in the following manner:

Kindergarten

I – Independent

P – Progressing

NT – Needs Time

Grades 1-2

E - Excellent

S - Satisfactory

N - Needs improvement

Grades 3-8

A 93-100% B+ 87-89% C+ 77-79% D+ 67-69% F 59% and below

A- 90-92% B 83-86% C 73-76% D 63-66%

B- 80-82% C- 70-72% D- 60-62%

Incomplete Assignments

Students must complete all assignments, projects, tests and quizzes when the teacher states that they are due. A failure to complete these tasks will be communicated to school administration. School administration will then work with the teacher, student and parents to develop a plan to complete the missed work and to ensure that school work is completed moving forward.

RETENTION

The teacher(s) of Mills River Seventh-day Adventist School are committed to working with each student individually, as much as possible, to ensure that the student understand and master new concepts as they are presented. Due to the diversity of cognitive abilities and learning styles, however, some students may take longer than others in their academic progress. When students fall behind one grade level or more, a meeting may be called by school administration to discuss possible home and/or school interventions. If, after various interventions are tried, the student continues to lag behind academically, it may be necessary to retain the student. This decision is made by consensus of the classroom teacher(s), the parents, and school administration.

The following factors will be considered for retention:

- Students in first grade who have not mastered minimum Reading or Math requirements.
- Students who have accumulated excessive absences.
- Students who have demonstrated a decided lack of effort and have failing grades.

In certain instances where a student demonstrates severe deficits academically, emotionally, and/or behaviorally, it may be recommended that the parents are asked to withdraw their child from Mills River Seventh-day Adventist School.

FIELD TRIPS / CLASS TRIPS

Field and class trips are an integral part of the educational experience at Mills River Seventh-day Adventist School. *Students are required to participate in these trips.* For some trips, a fee is assessed. The school will endeavor to keep costs to a minimum and will give as much advance notice as possible. **Mills River SDA School Standards of Conduct and Dress will be observed during these trips, and the school t-shirt is required for all field trips.**

Prior to participating in a trip, the teachers must have written permission from the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) on the form provided by the Mills River Seventh-day Adventist School. Parents providing transportation for field trips are asked to provide proof of liability insurance, and to assure correct use of seatbelts as required by North Carolina law.

Participation of younger or older siblings with a class trip will be granted or denied at the principal's discretion.

GUM POLICY

Gum chewing is not allowed on the school premises at any time unless special permission is granted by school administration. Noncompliance will result in a disciplinary action.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

During the course of the school year, disagreements may arise, that, if not handled in a responsible and respectable way, have the potential of becoming issues that affect the entire school family. Critical, sarcastic, judgmental, and negative remarks made about the school, teaching staff, students, or other persons associated with the school or church can cause even greater difficulties and may hinder resolutions to the problem. Hurt feelings, lost friendships, and damaged reputations are not a positive Christian witness to the community and should not find a place in God's family.

It is the responsibility of all who are a part of the school or church to use effective communication and earnest prayer in dealing with all misunderstandings and/or disagreements. In the event that a concern is not being resolved as a parent, student or staff member feels it should be, you are encouraged to follow the steps in Matthew 18, which may include the following: principal, teacher, school board chairman or pastor.

STUDENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. When there is a conflict in the classroom the teacher will bring students together to discuss what has happened and ways that this could be avoided in the future. This could be done by conversation or written accounts that are shared with the other student involved. The teacher will coach the students on ways to arrive at a better outcome in the future. If there is a history of the students' having difficulty with their relationship, then verbal or written reports will be conveyed to the parents of these students and the principal.
2. If repeated incidents occur within a short period of time, the teacher will begin to bring students together on a regular basis to talk and allow each one to have a voice. He or she will seek to find out if there is anything that needs to be addressed to make the relationship improve. Student and /or teacher documentation will be sent to the parents of these students and the principal.
3. The principal/ teacher have the option of meeting with both families separately to try to come to a solution.
4. When multiple attempts have been tried to resolve relational conflicts and are not successful, parents of both children will be asked by the principal to meet together with school personnel to resolve the situation.
5. Unresolved issues will be addressed at school board level.

DRESS CODE

Parental help in monitoring student dress BEFORE arrival at school is a must.

While dress is largely an individual matter, good sense and good taste require that certain standards be taken into consideration. Parents and/or students may not always agree with the standards of the school, but cooperation in this matter is necessary if a student is to remain in school.

Some basic guidelines:

- A student's appearance should not draw attention to themselves, but humbly point to Christ.
- All student attire should be clean, neat, modest and attractive.
- Slacks or jeans should not be faded, frayed, in disrepair, have holes, or be overly tight or baggy.
- Camouflage material/design is unacceptable attire for school or school sponsored outings.
- Jewelry, such as arm or wrist bracelets, finger or toe rings, any type of body piercing jewelry, necklaces or pendants, is not permitted. This also includes armbands of any kind (unless worn strictly for medical purposes).

- Cosmetics for the purpose of hiding blemishes are acceptable if they are natural in appearance. Unacceptable cosmetics include, but are not limited to, unnaturally colored hair, unnaturally appearing make-up, or body art of any type. Girls are to have well-kept hair and the ability to pull it back, as needed, for PE.
- Guys are to have shorter hair that is well-kept and is not below the collar.
- Nail polish should be clear coat only.

Shirts:

- Pants and tops must meet in all positions and the midriff (front and back) is to be covered at all times.
- Low necklines are not acceptable.
- Shirts must not have stenciled/photographed pictures/words and should have a collar.
- Tank tops/sleeveless shirts are not allowed.
- Sweatshirts, jackets, and hoodies should either be plain or may contain a Bible verse on them. Fletcher Academy and/or Mount Pisgah sweatshirts and hoodies may be worn.

Shorts, Pants, Skirts, Skorts, & Dresses:

- Skirts and dresses should be properly fitted and shall come to the top of the knee when standing. If the skirt has a slit, it may not be longer than two inches. Shorts should be worn under skirts and dresses (legging-like material for these is permissible, but the skirt/skort/dress must come to the knee).
- No silky, sports-like textured tennis skirts, shorts, pants, skorts, or dresses.
- Pants and shorts should be chino or denim material only.
- Shorts should be no shorter than two inches above the knee and should be of denim or Chino material. Gym shorts and bathing suit shorts should not be worn to school. Gym shorts are permissible ONLY for after-school sports.
- Spandex, leggings, jeggings, sweatpants, or exercise pants are not allowed.

Shoes:

- Closed-toe and closed-heel shoes and socks are required school apparel, since appropriate shoes are required for students to ensure safe participation in both indoor and outdoor activities. No crocs, sandals, or slip-on shoes without a heel, should be brought or worn to school.

If the student does not meet dress code parents will be called and students may remain in the office until proper clothing is sent in by the parent.

Students are expected to wear their school shirt on field trips and school outings.

On Fridays, students may wear school approved t-shirts. These will include school t-shirts, Pathfinder t-shirts, Mills River Valley Race t-shirts, Fletcher track and field t-shirts, and other t-shirts connected to the school approved by school administration.

Exceptions to the dress code are permissible as announced by the teacher for special functions.

The methods of enforcement of these policies will be at the discretion of the administration.

VOLUNTEERS & HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

All patrons of the school, parents of children attending and members of the church are members of the Home and School Association. They are encouraged and welcomed to assist in the programs of the school, the Association, and other functions sponsored for the betterment of relations between the home and the school. All volunteers, Home & School Association members, and field trip drivers (of other students besides your own) must complete training and a background check through Sterling Volunteers found online at <https://www.nadadventist.org/asv> before the first day of volunteering. The Sterling Volunteers Coordinator will contact you with your volunteer status after training and background check completion.

VISITORS

All visitors must check in at the school office. Please make sure that your visit carries a high level of importance so that teachers and students may utilize the school hours to the fullest.

ELECTRONICS POLICY

The following electronic items should be left at home and are not allowed on school grounds:

- Electronic gaming devices
- Any other electronic item that a staff member considers to be disruptive

All staff members have the right to confiscate any electronic item. Any confiscated items will be returned to a parent.

If there is a legitimate need to have one of the items listed above at school, this will need to be approved by administration prior to bringing the item onto school grounds.

SMART PHONES/GABB PHONES & SMART WATCHES/GABB WATCHES

Students with Smart phones/Gabb phones and/or Gabb watches/Smart watches must abide by the following procedures:

1. If students have Smart phones/Gabb phones and/ or Smart watches or devices and bring them to school, parents must sign the school's Cell Phone Agreement Policy.
2. Students with a Smart phone/Gabb phone, Gabb watch/Smart watch must turn it in to their teacher every morning upon arrival. The teacher will keep the device during the day and give it back to the student upon dismissal; however, students should not be on their cell phones unless specifically given permission from their teacher and/or principal, or they are in their vehicle.
3. Smart phones/Gabb phones and Gabb watches/Smart watches **must** also be given to the teacher on field trip days and will be returned at the end of the school day.

Smart phone/Gabb phone and Smart watch/Gabb watch violations consequences are as follows:

- a. First infraction: The electronic device will be taken and returned to the parent at the end of the school day.
- b. Second infraction: The electronic device will be returned to the parent and the student will not be allowed to bring it to school for a period of one week.
- c. Third infraction: The student will not be allowed to bring their device to school for the remainder of the school year.

These rules are needed to ensure the learning environment is protected from disruption and for the privacy of other students.

COMPUTER USE AGREEMENT

All families must read, sign, and return the Computer Use Agreement at registration before the student is allowed to use any technology on the school grounds.

DISCIPLINE

The Mills River SDA School is dedicated to the task of not only teaching students how to become productive adults, but also how to live for Christ in today's world. Emphasis is placed on self-discipline and self-respect, as well as respect for God and others.

The Mills River SDA school board reserves the right to make policy additions, deletions, and/or modifications during the school term that are deemed appropriate for a more effective school program and learning environment.

In certain cases, involving student discipline, the following may apply:

1. School administration reserves the right to immediately suspend any student who they feel is threatening the health and welfare of fellow students and/or teachers.
2. Lack of parental cooperation may result in the school board stepping in to expel the student.
3. Classes are not to be disrupted by parents wishing to speak with the teacher/principal regarding student progress, discipline problems, etc. Parents must make an appointment to speak with the teacher/principal in private—this may mean making an appointment for after academic instruction hours.
4. **At no time should a confrontation between a parent and teacher, or another parent, be witnessed by any student.**

It is the intent of the school board and staff/faculty to provide a safe and enriching school environment that teaches young people how to interact with others and to resolve differences, challenges and conflicts in a positive way. Therefore, if all options have been exhausted in resolving a situation, and continual discord and negative comments are still being made by those involved, then a meeting of the school board will be held to determine if the parents and student(s) involved should be requested to find an alternate educational program.

SCHOOL RULES

This list of behaviors and actions are minimum guidelines for a smoothly operating school year. The list is not all-inclusive and other behaviors will be handled as they occur. Methods of handling unacceptable behaviors in addition to the disciplinary code will be utilized as they are thought to be needed.

Inappropriate classroom behavior will not be tolerated, and include the following:

- Hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, biting, pinching, throwing objects, taunting, name-calling, bullying, inappropriate touching, or harassment of another student.
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, narcotics, and/or harmful inhalants.
- Possession of guns, knives, sharp objects, matches, lighters, explosives, and/or other dangerous materials. This includes toys or facsimiles of any weapon.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES: Bullying, Sexual Harassment, & Threats

Bullying is defined by the following:

- A **repeated** verbal, psychological, or physical act of aggression toward another individual.
- We say that a student is even being bullied or picked on when another student says or draws nasty or unpleasant things on paper, or makes repeated negative contact or comments toward or about another student.

- Bullying also occurs when a student is ignored or avoided by other students with hurtful intentions.

Bullying is inappropriate behavior, and will NOT be tolerated.

Sexual harassment is defined by the following:

- Unwarranted advances
- Graphic pictures drawn and/or displayed of a sexual nature.
- Inappropriate gestures and/or jokes.
- Sexual name calling or teasing
- Touching or exposing oneself inappropriately in front of others.
- Spreading inappropriate rumors about another student or staff member.
- Touching another student in an inappropriate way.

These types of behaviors will NOT be tolerated. Any student found to be participating in this type of behavior will be suspended until the School Board can decide on an appropriate disciplinary action. Students and parents are encouraged to report all types of sexual harassment to school administration.

Threats

Please note that all information received by the school administration and/or staff regarding a student(s) who threatens (even casually or in jest) a teacher, staff member, or another student with personal injury or death, or who threatens major property damage, will be treated in a serious manner by the school administration, school board, and the Carolina Conference Education Office. When it is confirmed that any such action was intended or has taken place, the student(s) will be immediately removed from the school until further notice by the school board and/or conference education office.

CUSTODY OF CHILDREN

It is the policy of Mills River SDA School to respect the rights of all parents as they relate to visiting a child or picking a child up from school. If the custody/visitation rights of a parent have been terminated by court order, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide Mills River SDA School with a copy of the court order. Additionally, Mills River SDA School requests that parents not involve the faculty and staff in any custody proceedings. As representatives of the school, teachers or staff will not involve themselves in any court proceedings involving students of the school without prior consent of the school board or a mandate of the court.

STATEMENT ON HUMAN SEXUALITY AND IDENTITY

Mills River SDA School is a Pre-kindergarten through eighth grade educational institution that is owned and operated by the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which is a part of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. As such, we adhere and agree to the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its interpretation and understanding of the scriptures. Therefore, we strive to conduct educational ministry within the world, maintaining our commitment to God as our Creator and Savior, and to fulfill the gospel commission of sharing Jesus Christ and His love with the world. With this foundation, we offer the following:

First, as a Seventh-day Adventist educational institution we neither condone nor promote any behavior outside of the Adventist biblical beliefs. Mills River SDA School's policy on human sexuality and identity are based on the North American Division Statement on Human Sexuality. This statement is based on Seventh-day Adventist understanding of scripture.

Second, our teachings on human sexuality and identity throughout the curriculum are aligned with Seventh-day Adventist biblical beliefs.

As a part of our commitment to Seventh-day Adventist education we have adopted the following guidelines to assist our students, parents, staff, and all other stakeholders:

1. Physical contact between students that would normally be viewed as overly affectionate in nature is not allowed. This includes, but is not limited to, extended touching, touching in sexual areas, long hugs, hand holding, kissing, and sexual intimacy.
2. Students will neither promote nor advocate a lifestyle while enrolled in Mills River SDA School that is not in accordance with the following:
 - a. "Adventist educational institutions do not condone gay, lesbian, or bisexual sexual practice or the promotion of sexual behavior outside of our biblical beliefs." (NAD Statements on Human Sexuality, p 3)
 - b. Discussions of acceptance of gay, lesbian, transgender, or bisexual practice.
3. Students must state their birth gender on an application for school:
 - a. The birth gender stated must be accurate
 - b. The birth gender determines restroom use, sports team choices, uniform choices, pronouns used, and any other issue as stated in the student handbook concerning sex.

4. Only one student at a time may be in school restroom facilities. While on field trips students must use bathrooms separately. Overnight field trips will be subject to approval.

5. A student will be addressed and use their legal name and pronoun.

Mills River SDA School is called to love all people. In this sin-filled world, our goal is to create an environment where all people love and respect each other.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” Colossian 3:12-14

HANDBOOK

This handbook is published under the authorization of the school board of Mills River Seventh-day Adventist School. Should subjective interpretations of school policy be necessary, the teacher may make that interpretation. If that interpretation is questioned or disputed by a student, parent or guardian, the principal may give the interpretation. The school board reserves the right to make final interpretations of school policy and to edit policy when and where necessary. The school reserves the right to make clear any interpretation of policy written or implied and is not subject to legal interpretation of wording or intention. The school board reserves the right to change and/or add to any policy or regulation contained in this book. As these changes are made, parents will be notified through the school parent letter. We encourage parents to read carefully all regulations. Great responsibility rests upon our parents in carrying out the Christian principles upon which our school operates.

A FINAL NOTE

Here are a few suggestions which will help your child succeed in his/her education experience.

1. Daily prayer and family worship.
2. Regular and punctual attendance.
3. Eight to ten hours of sleep every night.
4. A healthy breakfast and packed lunch as part of a nutritionally sound diet.
5. Daily cleanliness of both body and clothes.
6. Proper dental care, eye care, and other efforts to minimize physical ailments.
7. Consistent responsibility for homework.
8. A balanced schedule that minimizes screen time, includes participation in school programs, promotes exercise, and other wholesome activities.
9. Positive attitude toward church and school.
10. Regular parent-teacher conferences.