

KEOKUK MIDDLE SCHOOL

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2011 - 2012

Principal:
Associate Principal:
8th Grade Teacher:
7th Grade Teacher:
Dean of Students:
Secretary:

Mr. Benda
Mr. St. John
Mrs. Wills
Mrs. Scholl
Mrs. Rooney
Mrs. Marlin

MISSION STATEMENT

Keokuk Middle School is dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing environment for all students. At Keokuk Middle School, we believe that all students are able to be successful at learning if they are provided the correct environment and are willing to give the effort it takes to learn. The Keokuk Middle School Alternative School Program (KMS Learning Center) has been created to provide students with a quality alternative educational environment that will provide the curriculum and the development of life skills necessary for adapting to an ever-changing world.

Parents:

You are a very important person to us at the KMS Learning Center (L.C.). When we communicate with one another and let your child know that we are a team that is working with them to make school a quality experience, the better your child will do at the L.C. Since your child is attending the L.C., there obviously have been some issues that have affected his/her academic progress.

The L.C. is a commitment on you and your child's part to address those problems and change the course of your child's academic performance. There is no quick fix to these problems so the L.C. is not a program where students attend for a short period of time then return to the regular KMS program. If your child makes a commitment to the L.C. program, he/she will experience success. But, this success is a result of being in the L.C. program and not some simple change that has taken place with your child. If you and your child want to see your child's success continue, it is important that your commitment is for your child's entire middle school years, which is the completion of 8th grade. Simply put, your child needs to remain in the L.C. program until he/she enters high school where our goal is for him/her to enroll in the regular high school program.

Here are some things you can do to help your child be successful:

1. Encourage your child to attend school every day, unless they are sick. Children who have not been successful in school will attempt to avoid school. A common behavior is to insist they are sick. You cannot allow yourself to fall victim to this ploy. Make sure they are truly sick before allowing them to stay home. If they have to be absent, contact the school so we don't have to call or make a home visit. Make sure that your child understands that he/she will have to stay longer at school until all makeup work is completed.
2. Check Powerschool to see how your child is doing. If you don't know how to do that, contact the Alternative School secretary.
3. Talk to your child and frequently contact the school to see how your child is doing at school. We don't consider it a bother, but rather the job of a good and loving parent. Make sure your child knows that you are making regular contact with the school. Any child will attempt to control what information gets home to mom and dad. Don't allow yourself to fall victim of this ploy.
4. **If we do something you don't understand or agree with**, contact us right away. We will be happy to visit with you and get things worked out.
5. If at all possible, attempt to schedule doctor visits etc. for the late afternoon, or on a day when school isn't in session, so your child won't have to miss school. Attendance is a vital part of being successful at school.

**KEOKUK MIDDLE SCHOOL
LEARNING CONNECTIONS**

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM:

The Keokuk Middle School Learning Connections (L.C.) belief system is the same as the Keokuk Community School District.

We believe:

- Child development and education are the highest priorities for the Keokuk Community School District.
- In students mastering basic academic skills in the early grades confirmed by comprehensive assessment.
- In identifying proficiencies in all levels and content areas based on high standards and confirmed by comprehensive assessment.
- In a secure and nurturing environment that builds self-esteem.
- In a learning environment appropriate for the changing needs of our students and work world.
- In clean and safe facilities.
- In schools which value and understand each student's uniqueness and enable all students to reach their full potential.
- In treating all students with respect.
- In the development of social responsibility and citizenship.
- Schools should create opportunities for exploration and preparation for a diversity of careers.
- In providing effective professional staff leadership.
- That staff are more effective when supported by family and community.
- That involvement by and communication among the community, family, staff and learners is vital to education at all levels.

Students who are having difficulty and are not finding success in the regular Middle School program many times just need an alternative environment that can meet their specific needs. Keokuk Middle School L.C. students are intellectually able to manage grade level curriculum but for some reason that is not being accomplished. They may have behaviors that interfere with their social and academic skills but those behaviors generally change once they begin experiencing academic success.

Students voluntarily enroll in the L.C. which means there must be a commitment on their part and a desire to be successful before that success can be attained.

The L.C. program will address the three important areas of Academics, Attendance, and Positive Behavior. All students will be encouraged to progress through the curriculum and through the program with self-directedness and self-motivation. The L.C. is also a place where students will be encouraged to explore and cultivate their strengths. Students who experience academic success also experience an improvement in attitude and self-esteem. This opens the door to them discovering talents and interests they did not realize they had. Each small step forward draws them closer to being the successful young adult we all want them to be. But, they need consistent guidance on our part to reach that goal.

LEARNING CONNECTIONS ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Students may be referred for enrollment at the L.C. by any teaching team from the Keokuk Middle School, Guidance Counselors, Administrators, Dean of Students, or by a parent. Should you believe your child would benefit from the L.C. program, you need to contact his/her Guidance Counselor. The following steps will be followed before admission in the program is approved:

1. Information related to your child's academic, attendance, and behavior history will be collected.
2. A review of this information will take place with input from counselors, teachers, and administrators. Parents will be contacted should additional information be needed.
3. The student's status for admission into the L.C. program will then be determined by a team consisting of counselors and administrators. This status includes determining if L.C. placement is in the best interests of the child.
4. Before a student is admitted into the L.C. program, there will be a meeting with the student and parent/guardian to explain the program. Enrollment is limited so this screening process is an attempt to determine if the student and parent/guardian are truly committed to the program.
5. **The student and parent/guardian** must sign a contract stating they agree to abide by all L.C. rules.

Who is a candidate for the L.C.?

KMS students who are experiencing academic failure, attendance problems, social problems with their peers, or who are experiencing problems at home that are affecting their ability to be successful at school are candidates for the L.C. Students who are transferring to the Keokuk Community School District and have been in an alternative school program in their previous school also will be considered for placement directly into the program. The L.C. is a 7th and 8th grade program but 6th grade students may be identified for placement beginning in their 7th grade year. Students with a history of serious assault and aggressive behavior are not appropriate candidates for the L.C. program. Students who refuse to comply with L.C. rules will not be allowed to remain in the program.

Students with an IEP are already placed in the SPED program, which is designed to meet their needs, and their enrollment in the L.C. is discouraged. However, on occasion, the staffing team may feel a student might be better served in the L.C. program. There are three conditions that must be met for this to occur:

1. The Principal must be contacted and a placement meeting must be held.
2. The L.C. program must become an identified and documented strategy of the IEP. *
3. The student's Special Education teacher must remain in place as the monitor of the IEP.

* Since Special Education students will not be removed from a SPED placement for placement at L.C., a reconvening of the IEP team will be scheduled if the L.C. placement is not working.

KEOKUK MIDDLE SCHOOL LEARNING CONNECTIONS GUIDELINES

Learning Connections Student Day:

L.C. students are to report to the KMS building in the mornings. They may enter the building beginning at 7:30 a.m. but need to be there no later than 8:10 a.m. Students may eat breakfast at KMS or report to the gym where they will be supervised until the beginning of the school day. Upon dismissal from the gym, they will either report to the L.C. building or to their first period class at the KMS building. **L.C. students are not to report to the L.C. building in the mornings unless they have a pass from an L.C. teacher.**

Class Schedule:

Period 1:	L.C. Homeroom or KMS Exploratory Class
Period 2:	7 th Grade Science and 8 th Grade Social Studies
Period 3:	7 th Grade L.Arts Reading and 8 th Grade P.E./Study Hall
Period 4:	7 th Grade P.E./Study Hall and 8 th Grade L.Arts Reading
Period 5:	7 th Grade Math and 8 th Grade Language Arts 7 th Grade Lunch
Period 6:	7 th Grade Social Studies and 8 th Grade Math 8 th Grade Lunch
Period 7:	7 th Grade Language Arts and 8 th Grade Science
Period 8:	7 th & 8 th Grade Lifeskills or KMS Exploratory Class

The student day may be extended to 3:30 should there be discipline problems during the day, the student has not completed all academic work, or if the student has been absent and has makeup work to complete. Parents will be contacted to work out arrangements for getting the child home.

Inclement Weather – In the event the school district has to announce a late start or early dismissal, parents/guardians need to listen to local Radio KOKX-AM-1310 or to one of the T.V. stations – WGEM-TV(10) or KHQQA-TV(7). If school starts late, students shouldn't arrive earlier than the change in the start of school. A 2-hour delay will result in the students being able to be at school 2 hours later, which would be 9:30 a.m. and the school day would begin at 10:15 a.m. If school has to be dismissed early, parents need to have a plan of where their child will go, so they can be picked up, ride the bus, or walk to that location. The school district has a 24-hour phone number, 319-524-1402 then follow the directions from the menu of numbers. You can call for updates or Ms. Wills ext: 2604, Ms. Pentzien ext. 2603, Ms. Rooney ext. 2601. Learning Connection students will be under the guidelines of the L.C. as well as the Keokuk Middle School student handbooks.

L.C. students will be under the guidelines of the Keokuk Middle School Student Handbook. There are also L.C. guidelines and procedures that students must comply with in order to remain in the program.

L.C. students will receive instruction in Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, and Social Skills. L.C. students also may enroll in classes in the regular KMS program. Students who do not display the ability to meet the L.C. Program standards or who do not maintain acceptable grades, attendance, and behavior in the regular KMS classes will be removed from those classes. Students will be expected to show progress towards the successful completion of all schoolwork to remain in the L.C. program.

The L.C. program is designed to provide students with the opportunity to complete their schoolwork during the school day. Work missed because of absences is expected to be completed in a timely manner as determined by the L.C. staff. This means that students who have been absent from school may be expected to remain at school at the end of the regular school day to complete this makeup work. Students who are not able to remain or refuse to remain will be given the makeup work, which is due the following morning to receive credit.

L.C. students will be expected to maintain at least the 80% Level 1-Novice attendance rate for each grading period. This includes all absences whether they are excused or unexcused. Failure to contact the school when a child is absent qualifies as unexcused. The Keokuk School District has the authority to determine what is an excused or unexcused absence. Continued questionable absences may result in parents being required to provide an excuse from the doctor to show the absences are justified; or, the parent and child may be referred to the County Attorney for excessive excused or unexcused absences. L.C. staff will work with students to help them maintain the 80% attendance by providing them the opportunity to attend school before or after the regular school day. Parents are responsible to provide transportation for their children when this opportunity is provided. Students not maintaining this minimum percent for attendance risk being dropped from the program.

L.C. students who continue to display unacceptable behavior will be removed from the L.C. program as they are displaying a lack of commitment to the program. Only those students who are committed to the guidelines of the program will be allowed to remain in the program because of the limit on the number of students who may be enrolled in the program.

Parents/Guardians are required to take an active role in their child's education program at the L.C. Parents indicated they were committed to the guidelines of the L.C. program. This means they must be prepared to abide by those guidelines or face the possibility that their child will be dropped from the L.C. program. This will include regular meetings such as Parent-Teacher Conferences and other meetings as deemed necessary.

Phones and other electronic devices –Cell phones are only allowed to be used before school, after school, at lunchtime, and during movement from the L.C. building and the KMS building. Cell phones will be kept in secure location during the school day, with

student access at appropriate times. Violating cell phone policy will result in the phone being taken from the student and a parent/guardian must pick up the phone. A student may also be banned from having a cell phone at school.

All other electronic devices are not allowed during the school day unless the L.C. staff provides special privileges for the use of such devices. These privileges may be limited to specific students who have displayed appropriate grades, attendance, and/or behavior to warrant this opportunity.

Extra-Curricular Activities-L.C. students are encouraged to participate in KMS extra-curricular activities. These activities normally begin after the normal KMS dismissal at 3:15 p.m. An L.C. student who does participate in these activities and is able to leave school early must either remain at the L.C. until 3:15 or leave school grounds and not return until 3:15. Leaving school grounds does not include hanging around the neighborhood until 3:15.

Medications – Any student who needs to take medication at school must have a signed parent /guardian medical release form authorizing school staff to administer the medication. All medication issues must be communicated with the KMS nurse. All medications brought to school must be in the original prescription container. The medication will be kept locked either in the L.C. office or the KMS nurse’s office. The signed form will be placed on file in the L.C. Office and the nurse’s office. A medication log will be maintained showing the name of the medication, dosage amount, when the medication was given, and which staff member administered the medication.

All medication will be administered under the direction of the Middle School nurse but may need to be administered by someone other than the nurse. If a student is in need of medical assistance, the L.C. staff will work with the KMS nurse and the student’s parents. Students aren’t allowed to bring medications including over the counter meds to school without permission of the school staff.

At no time is a student to have possession of any medication at school. All medicine, including over the counter medication, is to be checked in with the nurse or the L.C. staff. It is important that any medical needs of the student be communicated to the L.C. staff and the nurse so that they are aware of your child’s needs.

Grade Recovery Program-Because of the design of the L.C. program as it relates to academic work, L.C. students are not eligible for the KMS Grade Recovery Program.

Leaving the L.C. Program-Should a student be removed from the L.C. program or the student choose to leave the program during the school year, the student is not eligible to return to the program. Admission to the L.C. program the following year is only available if all other students who are candidates have been placed at the L.C. and KMS and L.C. staff determine the student’s return is warranted.

Should a student successfully complete their 7th grade year at the L.C. and choose to return to the regular KMS program in 8th grade, they would only be able to return to the L.C. program if all other students who are candidates have been placed at the L.C. Students should understand that it is the L.C. program that is the environment that provides them with the opportunity for the greatest success and they should establish a goal of returning to the high school regular program upon their successful completion of their 8th grade year in the L.C. program.

LEVEL 3 -- JOURNEYMAN

A Journeyman is a student who has exceeded all requirements of Level 2 - - Apprentice for two consecutive weeks.

1. Maintains grades of at least a B- and completes assigned schoolwork in a timely manner as determined by the L.C. staff.
2. Attends school daily with attendance not falling below 90%
3. Avoids problems with peers and staff without prompt and no behavior problems noted.

Rewards of being at this level:

Level 3 students may leave school at 2:15 p.m. if all daily work is complete, all makeup work is completed to L.C. staff satisfaction, there have been no discipline problems during that day, and all detention owed through that day has been served. Since L.C. students are minors, school policy requires that a parent/guardian must approve the early dismissal each day the student qualifies.

Level 3 students may also leave school at 2:15 p.m. if they are participating in volunteer work in the community or if they have a job. The above guidelines would not apply in these circumstances but would affect the student's Level 3 status within a short period of time should the student not meet those guidelines on a daily basis.

By demonstrating responsibility and hard work, Level 3 students may earn additional privileges and freedoms throughout the school day beyond those a Level 2 student has earned.

If a student at level 3 has absences or has a minor set back in their programming that drops them below the Level 3 standards, they will have 5 school days to show they are willing to do what it takes to return to Level 3 status. Failure to do so will result in them being moved back to Level 2, if they meet the standards for that level. A Level 3 student could move back to Level 1 should serious incidents occur which would void the 5 day frame of time to remain at Level 3.

Moving from Levels:

Moving a student from level to level is not something the L.C. staff takes lightly. Should a student fail to meet the standards of Level 2 or Level 3, the student will be informed of the reason for dropping to a lower level. Levels are reviewed on Friday of each week and will be posted on Monday of the following week.

LEVEL 2 - - APPRENTICE

An Apprentice is a student who has exceeded all requirements of Level 1 - - Novice for two consecutive weeks.

1. Maintains grades of at least a C- and completes assigned schoolwork in a timely manner as determined by the L.C. staff.
2. Attends school daily with attendance not falling below 85%.
3. Avoids problems with peers and staff without prompt and no major behavior problems noted.

Rewards of being at this level:

Level 2 students may leave school at 2:45 p.m. if all daily work is complete, all makeup work is completed to L.C. staff satisfaction, there have been no discipline problems during that day, and all detention owed through that day has been served. Since L.C. students are minors, school policy requires that a parent/guardian must approve the early dismissal each day the student qualifies.

Level 2 students will have privileges such as, but not limited to:

- Chewing gum during the school day.
- Wearing a hat in the building.
- Working independently in the hallway or in another classroom.
- Participate in “free time” activities.

By demonstrating responsibility and hard work, Level 2 students may earn additional privileges and freedoms throughout the school day beyond those a Level 1 student has earned.

If a student at Level 2 has absences or has a minor set back in their programming that drops them below the Level 2 standards, they will have 5 school days to show they are willing to do what it takes to return to Level 2 status. Failure to do so will result in them being moved back to Level 1. A Level 2 student could move back to Level 1 should serious incidents occur which would void the 5 day frame of time to remain at Level 2.

Moving from Levels:

Moving a student from level to level is not something the L.C. staff takes lightly. Should a student fail to meet the standards of Level 2, the student will be informed of the reason for dropping to Level 1. Levels are reviewed on Friday of each week and will be posted on Monday of the following week.

LEVEL I - - NOVICE

All students at the L.C. begin at Level 1. Novice students need to demonstrate a willingness to meet the standards established to remain in the L.C. program. A Novice student needs to demonstrate willingness to:

1. Complete all assigned schoolwork at a quality level that results in passing grades at each grading period.
2. Attends school daily with attendance not dropping below 80%.
3. Work on positive behavior with an apparent attempt to reduce inappropriate behaviors.

Novice students generally still need assistance from the staff to maintain appropriate levels of interactions with others. A Novice needs to avoid negative behaviors and joining others in negative behavior. At the Novice Level I, students may be allowed limited opportunities to interact with others. Students on this level have not yet demonstrated sufficient responsibility to be granted special freedoms awarded to those at the next two levels.

Level 1 students may leave school at 3:15 p.m. if all daily work is complete, all makeup work is completed to L.C. staff satisfaction, there have been no discipline problems during that day, and all detention owed through that day has been served. Since L.C. students are minors, school policy requires that a parent/guardian must approve the early dismissal each day the student qualifies.

Students at this level have no special privileges or exceptions to school rules.

If a student at Level 1 has academic, attendance, or behavioral problems that drops them past the standards of Level 1 and puts them at risk of being dropped from the L.C. program, they will be provided specific guidelines and timelines for meeting those standards. Failure to do so will result in them being dropped from the program. Should serious problems arise in academics, attendance, or behavior, students may be removed from the L.C. program immediately.

Being dropped from the L.C. Program:

Dropping a student from the program is not something the L.C. staff takes lightly. Should a student fail to meet the standards of Level 1, the student will be informed of the situation and provided guidelines and timelines to remedy the deficiencies. Failure to do so will result in the student being dropped from the program. Serious problems with a student, the student's refusal to comply with L.C. rules, or parental refusal to cooperate with L.C. staff and/or comply with L.C. rules will result in the student being dropped from the program. No child will be allowed to interfere with the goals of the L.C. program that could result in having a negative affect on the other students. Students who are dropped from the program will not be allowed to return that school year and will have limited access to the program the following school year.

Learning Connections Enrollment Form

2011-2012

Student Name _____ Age _____

 Last First M.
Grade Level _____ Sex M F Birth date ___ / ___ / ___

Mother/Guardian _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Work Phone _____

Email Address (Optional)

Father/Guardian _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Work Phone _____

Emergency Contacts (Must be at least 21 years old and a resident of Keokuk District):

Name Address Relationship Phone

Name Address Relationship Phone

Any other person or agency involved (i.e. Day Treatment, Juvenile Court, DHS and the contact person(s):

Learning Connections Contract

I have been provided with the Learning Connections Student Handbook. I understand my rights and responsibilities.

By signing this contract to attend Learning Connections, **my parents and I agree to the following:**

1. I will attend the program on a daily basis at the required minimum attendance rate of 80%.
2. I will agree to comply with **all behavioral expectations.**
3. I agree to **work up to my potential on all academic tasks and maintain passing grades in all classes at all grading periods.**
4. **My parents/guardians and I will attend** all staffings/conferences held on my behalf. I have the right to ask for a staffing at any time I feel that I would like to.
5. I agree that dismissal time at the Learning Connections is 3:15 p.m. if all daily work is complete, all makeup work is completed to L.C. staff satisfaction, there have been no discipline problems during that day, and all detention owed through that day has been served. Otherwise, I may be expected to remain at school until 3:30 p.m.
6. I understand that all students are expected to have their schoolwork completed by the end of the day. Failure to do so may result in remaining after school to complete the work. Refusal to remain, or excused conflicts with remaining after school, will result in the schoolwork being sent home and the work must be returned the next morning to receive credit.

We understand that failure to comply with the above expectations may result in removal from the L.C. program.

Signature (Student)

Date

Signature (Parent/Guardian)

Date

Signature (School Representative)

Date
