



alpha



717.447.2655

WWW.MCAlpha.ORG



Staff Spotlight

Mrs. Hackenberger

Mrs. Hackenberger is a learning support teacher with the Alpha program. Her favorite part of the day is "hearing students share positive parts of their day with me and the things they're excited about. Seeing their smiles and excitement reminds me why I love what I do!"

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, September 7, 2026

Labor Day – No School for Students

Wednesday, September 9, 2026

Back-to-School Night at Alpha(MCHS)

Friday, September 11, 2026

Picture Day for all Alpha students at MCHS

**COMMUNITY EVENT
SPOTLIGHT**

Tuesday, September 29, 2026

Goose Day celebrations
September 25-29
For more info, visit
<https://jrvvisitors.com/>



And Just Like That... We're Off and Running!

What a fantastic first week in the Alpha Program! 🎉 The halls are once again filled with familiar faces, laughter, and the excitement that comes with the start of a brand-new school year. It has been so great to see our students back in the building and to welcome our new Alpha students and families to our school community. The first week is always filled with new routines, new goals, and plenty of opportunities—and we couldn't be more excited to see what this year will bring!

While the first week is only the beginning, it has already been a great reminder that Alpha is more than just an online learning program—it's a community. Our students bring unique talents, personalities, goals, and dreams to Alpha, and our staff is excited to help each of them find success. As we move into the weeks ahead, I encourage our students to embrace the opportunities before them, ask questions, challenge themselves, and make the most of their Alpha experience. To our students and families, thank you for helping us get the year off to such a great start.

The Alpha adventure has officially begun, and we are looking forward to an amazing year together!

Christopher M. Gill

Staying Connected with ParentSquare

Beginning this school year, the MCSD will be using ParentSquare as our school-to-home communication platform. Email invitations were sent to parents and guardians on Wednesday, August 26th. If you have not yet registered, please activate your account so you don't miss important Alpha, school, or district updates.



BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT

The Alpha Back-to-School Night will be held on Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at 6:00 pm. This is a parents/guardians-only event that is an excellent opportunity to follow your student's schedule and learn more about all things Alpha from our staff. Parents and guardians will follow their student's Day 2 schedule in the six-day cycle. We hope to see you there!

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences can be scheduled throughout the school year, not just during our scheduled conference days in November. We recognize that the available conference times on November 23-25 may not be convenient for every family. If you are interested in a parent-teacher conference, please reach out to your student's teacher.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) Team is a group of professionals dedicated to identifying and assisting students who may be struggling with life issues that interfere with school performance. The SAP team consists of teachers, administrators, school counselors, social workers, nurses, and representatives from community agencies who have been specially trained to work with students and make appropriate referrals. This help is provided in a completely non-disciplinary way.

Based on the diverse needs of our students, this process may include an interview with a member of the SAP team, a counseling group, or individual counseling with the school-based therapist or social worker. Services may include academic support; behavior management; drug and alcohol education, prevention, assessment, and treatment through Clear Concepts; anger management; mental health assessment through the Youth Advocate Program; conflict resolution, or involvement in community agencies.

All SAP-related services are free and confidential. A parent or guardian must sign a permission form for SAP services. Any student, parent, or teacher may make a referral. If you have concerns for an MCSD student in grades K-12, please contact an administrator, school counselor, or school nurse.

NOTES FROM THE NURSE

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medication Forms were handed out during Homeroom on the first few days of school. If your child did not return a signed OTC Medication Form, the nurse's office is unable to provide your child with OTC medication at school. Students may request new OTC Medication Forms from the nurse's office if needed.

If your child requires medication not provided on the OTC Medication Form, ALL other medication or items used for medicinal purposes require an order from a licensed healthcare provider. A new physician or provider order must be resubmitted to the school nurse EACH school year before the school nurse can administer medications at school.

According to PA medication guidelines for schools, the ONLY medications that students may carry and self-administer are EpiPen autoinjectors, asthma inhalers, and diabetic supplies. These three medications may only be self-carried and self-administered if a current physician order is on file in the nurse's office.

Students ARE NOT permitted to carry any other medications on their person during school hours or school-sponsored activities. This includes cough drops, antibiotics, medicated creams and ointments, eye drops, or any items used for medicinal purposes.

Any medication that must be administered at school **must be transported to and from school by a parent, guardian, or designated adult and must be accompanied by a physician's order.** Prescription medications must be in a labeled prescription bottle. OTC medication should be in sealed, new packaging. No more than a 30-day supply will be stored in the nurse's office. All medications will be counted with the parent or designated adult.

Please make arrangements with Mrs. Grabill, RN, or Mrs. Moist, LPN, before delivering medication to MCHS. **Front Office Staff are unable to accept medication from parents.** Please call or email the MCHS School Nurses with questions regarding medications.

Mrs. Grabill brg27@mcsdk12.org
Mrs. Moist jml45@mcsdk12.org

SCHOOL PICTURES

All Alpha students in grades 6-12 can get their school picture taken at Mifflin County High School on **Friday, September 11th**. Strawbridge Studios will ensure that both the middle school and the junior high school receive the pictures for the Alpha students from their respective schools. Re-takes will be on **Thursday, October 29th**.

Safe2Say Something

Safe2Say Something is a youth violence prevention program run by the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General. The program teaches youth and adults how to recognize warning signs and signals, especially within social media, from individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and to “say something” BEFORE it is too late. With Safe2Say Something, it’s easy and confidential to report safety concerns to help prevent violence and tragedies.

Here’s how it works:

- Submit an anonymous tip report through the Safe2SaySomething system
- Crisis center reviews, assesses and processes all submissions
- Crisis center sends all submissions to school administration and/or law enforcement for intervention
- If needed, crisis center may contact tipster anonymously through the app



SEE IT. REPORT IT.



MOBILE APP



1-844-SAF2SAY

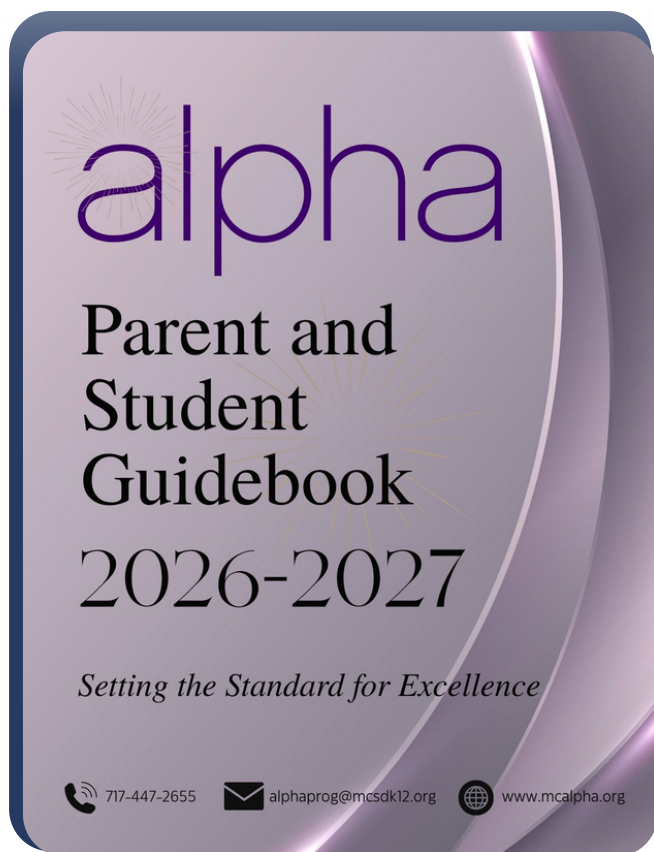


SAFE2SAYPA.ORG

MCHS YEARBOOK INFORMATION

The Mifflin County High School 2026–2027 yearbook preorder sale is now open. Please note that prices will increase throughout the year.

- **Early Discount Price:** Yearbooks are currently available for \$60.00 through November 13, 2026.
- **Second Discounted Price:** Will take effect November 14, 2026, and will increase the book cost to \$65.00
- **Regular Price:** Yearbooks will switch to regular non-discounted prices of \$70.00 on January 2nd, 2027, and will remain that price until book inventory is sold out.
- **How to Order:** Order Online at **www.balfour.com** or with a completed order form submitted to Mr. Riden in Room A316



2026-2027 PARENT AND STUDENT GUIDEBOOK

For all things Alpha, our 2026-2027 Alpha Parent and Student Guidebook is a must-have resource! How attendance is completed, transportation availability, laptop use, tutoring options, athletic eligibility, and more can be found at the link below. The guidebook should be considered a dynamic publication, as we expect periodic updates due to some recent changes to cyber education at the state level, so you may see changes each time you open the document or refresh.

[Alpha 2026-2027 Parent and Student Guidebook](#)

NEW

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES FOR FULL-TIME ALPHA STUDENTS

Full-time Alpha students will not be required to sign into Skyward for their daily attendance. However, full-time students will need to meet minimum daily activity, cumulative weekly activity, or maintain academic pace according to the online platform's Target Due Dates. For more information, please refer to the Parent and Student Guidebook or reach out to the Alpha Staff.



NEW

MANDATORY WELLNESS CHECKS FOR FULL-TIME ALPHA STUDENTS

Recent changes in Pennsylvania state law, amending the PA School Code, now require all full-time virtual students to be seen and heard by school personnel at least once per week. Students can fulfill this requirement by coming to Alpha during the week or participating in a Zoom session on Fridays. More details are included in the infographic below as well as the guidebook. Please note that failure to meet this requirement could result in dismissal from online learning. Please reach out to Alpha staff if you have any questions.

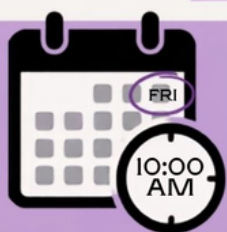


Alpha Virtual Student Wellness: Weekly Check-In & Compliance Guide



Under Pennsylvania HB 1505 (Section 1327.4 of the PA School Code), all full-time virtual students must participate in weekly wellness checks to verify their well-being and participation. Alpha implements this through a specific weekly schedule that escalates from digital outreach to in-person home visits if a check is missed.

The Weekly Routine



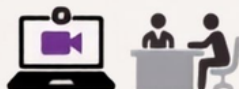
Friday Morning Wellness Check at 10:00 AM

All full-time Alpha virtual students must join the weekly Wellness Check via Zoom if they have not been seen and heard by Alpha Staff during the week. Joining this Zoom satisfies the requirement of the wellness check for the week.



Live Visual & Verbal Interaction

Students must be seen visually and speak in real-time with school staff.



Alternative Verification Methods

Zoom conferencing with an Alpha instructor or attending Alpha in-person also satisfies the weekly requirement.

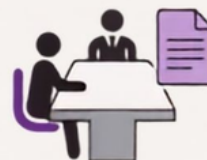
Escalation Timeline for Missed Checks



Within 1 Day of Wellness Check:

If the student has not been seen and heard during the week and misses the Friday Zoom Wellness Check, Alpha contacts parents within one school day via

*ParentSquare to alert the parent of the missed Wellness Check.



Wednesday: Wellness Review Conference

A mandatory Wellness Review Conference must be held if the student is not seen and heard from within three days of the previous Friday's Wellness Check.



Thursday: In-Person Home Visit

If the Wellness Review Conference is missed, a mandatory home visit by school personnel occurs by the end of the school day on Thursday.

*ParentSquare message will alert the recipient that the student was not seen or heard by Alpha Staff during the previous week and must now arrange an alternate time to be seen and heard prior to 10:00 am on the following Wednesday. This message will also include a time on Wednesday for the Wellness Review Conference if needed.

STAY INFORMED

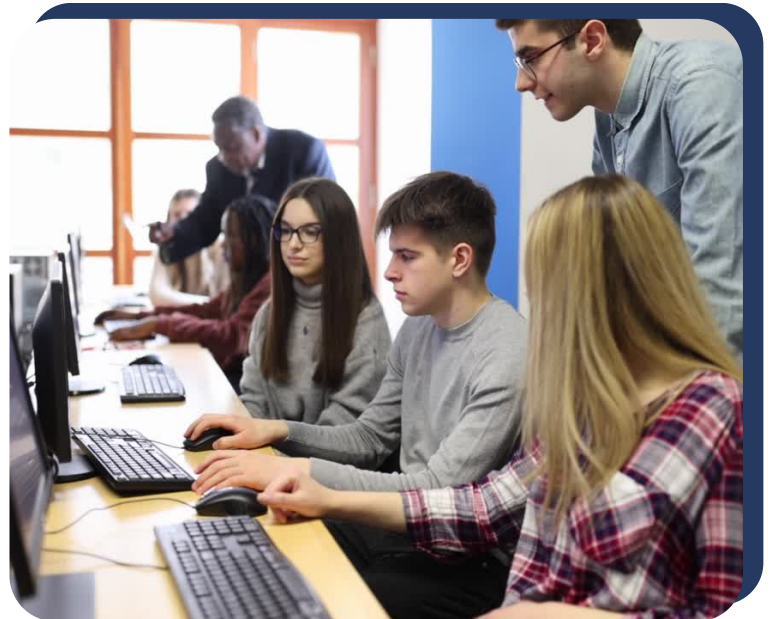


All Alpha students are students of their respective building based schools (Mifflin County Middle School, Mifflin County Junior High School, Mifflin County High School, and the Academy). We encourage all students and parents to review newsletters from your respective school to stay informed. The links are provided below.

[MIFFLIN COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER](#)
[MIFFLIN COUNTY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER](#)
[MIFFLIN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER](#)
[THE ACADEMY NEWSLETTER](#)

ALPHA EXTENDED HOURS

The Alpha program is open from 3:30 pm to 6:00 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This is a great opportunity for students to take exams or to get some extra assistance from two of our Alpha teachers in a low-key environment. We encourage our students to take advantage of this opportunity when needed. **Our first Extended Hours day will be Thursday, September 10th.**



MORNING HOURS



Alpha classroom C207, next to the Alpha Staff Office, is open every school day, starting at 7:30 am. Students may arrive via Door 18 at the back corner of MCHS or by signing out of the MCHS cafeteria. This is another excellent opportunity to receive assistance or take exams.

7 Ways Parents Can Support Online Learners

1. Help Establish a Routine

Create a consistent daily schedule for schoolwork, breaks, meals, activities, and sleep. A predictable routine helps students know what is expected and reduces procrastination.

2. Create a Productive Learning Space

A dedicated, reasonably quiet place for schoolwork can help students transition into “school mode.” It doesn’t have to be elaborate—consistency is more important than perfection.

3. Encourage Students to Check Their Own Progress

Rather than always asking, “Did you do your work?”, try questions such as:

“What are you working on today?”

“What is your goal for this week?”

“What assignments do you still need to complete?”

“Is there anything you need help understanding?”

This helps develop executive functioning and independence.

4. Encourage Communication with Teachers

Teach students to reach out when they are confused, falling behind, or struggling with an assignment. Learning to advocate for themselves is an important part of becoming an independent learner.

5. Monitor Without Hovering

Parents should be aware of attendance, grades, assignments, and overall progress, but students also need opportunities to take ownership. Support the student without doing the work for the student.

6. Celebrate Progress—Not Just Grades

Recognize effort, persistence, improved organization, meeting a goal, asking for help, or making progress after a difficult week. These small victories can build confidence and a growth mindset.

7. Stay Connected With Alpha

Communication between home and school is especially important in an online environment. If you notice a change in your student’s motivation, engagement, attendance, or academic progress, reach out to the Alpha team early. We would much rather work with a family when a small concern first appears than wait until it becomes a larger problem.

A simple message for parents

Your role isn’t to sit beside your student all day. Your role is to help your student learn how to manage the day. Encourage routines, ask questions, monitor progress, celebrate growth, and help your student develop the confidence to take ownership of their education. At Alpha, we want parents to know that you are not in this alone—we are partners in helping your student succeed.

SECONDARY STUDENT HANDBOOK

At Alpha we strive to create a safe, respectful, and engaging learning environment for all students. To support this goal, we ask that families review the Student Handbook for Secondary Education, which outlines important policies, expectations, and guidelines. The handbook can be found on the MCSD website or [at this link](#). We encourage parents and guardians to read through the handbook with their student to ensure everyone is familiar with school rules, attendance policies, and behavior expectations. Please note that as policy updates occur, there may be changes to the Student Handbook.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES – MCSD POLICY 906

The Alpha program is committed to maintaining a positive and responsive school environment. If you have a concern or complaint about Board policy and procedures, programs, personnel, operations or facilities, concerns should be addressed directly with the teacher, staff member, or administrator involved. Many issues can be resolved through open and respectful communication. More information on complaint procedures is provided in Policy 906 of the MCSD Policy Manual.

REVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS – MCSD POLICY 105.1

Mifflin County School District School Board Policy 105.1 requires annual notification to parents/guardians and students that parents/guardians and students have an opportunity to review instructional materials and have access to information about the curriculum, including academic standards to be achieved, instructional materials and assessment techniques. Requests to review instructional materials and access information about the curriculum, including academic standards to be achieved, instructional materials and assessment techniques should be made by submitting a written request to the building principal.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES – MCSD POLICY 110

The building principal will be responsible to ensure that no student in the school is denied participation in any school program for financial reasons and that the privacy of each student is protected. The principal will use the guidelines of the free and reduced price lunch program to determine the ability of students to provide necessary school supplies. Parents/Guardians must complete the Application For Instructional Supplies and submit required documentation when requesting free instructional supplies for students. Please contact the principal for more information and to request the application.

MCSD POLICY AND SCHOOL BOARD INFORMATION

Please visit the Mifflin County School District website for information regarding Board Policies, Agendas, and Minutes. Information on this site also includes the current school board members and school board meeting dates.

Please visit the following link <https://www.mcSDK12.org/school-board/>.