

**MILTON  
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## **Your Guide to the MHS Visitation Policy**



**[www.mhskids.org](http://www.mhskids.org)**

## *What you need to know*

Milton Hershey School promotes the active, ongoing relationship and involvement of parents and sponsors, families, and other authorized visitors with students in accordance with the MHS Visitation Policy.

All visitation requests must be prearranged in writing and can be in the form of:

- weekend daytime visits
- five (5) overnight weekend visits
- holiday break visitation

Occasionally, a visitation request may be denied in order to promote consistent scheduling or to encourage children to participate in an important School program or activity. The following information will help you better understand the MHS Visitation Policy. If you have questions, please contact your child's houseparents.



## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **Who is an “authorized visitor?”**

Visitors other than MHS staff members must be authorized by the parent/sponsor. Authorized visitors must be at least 21 years old. Natural parents or adoptive parents have full visitation rights unless restricted by an Order of the Court.

- Each student may have up to five (5) approved visitors on the *Visitors Roster*, unless otherwise approved by the Home Life director.
- Authorization of visitors will be based upon the knowledge and information presented by the parent/sponsor at the time of the request.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Procedure used to authorize visitors:

1. The parent/sponsor requests a *Visitor Authorization* form from the student's houseparents, completes the form, and returns it to the houseparents.
2. The houseparents review the form to make sure the information is complete, then forward it to the Home Life administrator.
3. The Home Life administrator will review the form and, if approved, will send a verification letter along with the *Your Guide to the MHS Visitation Policy* brochure to the authorized visitor.
4. The houseparents will add the authorized visitor's name to the *Visitors Roster*.

Individuals recommended for authorization by the parent/sponsor will be approved unless, in the School's judgment, the visitor may place a student's or a staff member's well-being at risk.

Authorization for visitors who are the parent/sponsor of another MHS student is granted solely on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the Home Life director.

Authorized visitors may be removed from the *Visitors Roster* by the School if they place a student's or staff member's well-being at risk or fail to adhere to the rules of the *MHS Visitation Policy*.

Only houseparents may make adjustments to the student home *Visitors Roster*.

## What is the policy for weekend daytime visitation?

For the student's best interest, the following guidelines for daytime visiting are in place:

- Students must be in good standing to visit with anyone other than their parents/sponsors.
- Students serving Level III and IV detentions will not be permitted an approved visitation with anyone, including parents/sponsors.
- Student responsibilities in the student home, health services, scholastic, and co-curricular activities, must be met before visitation begins.

## How do I arrange a weekend daytime visit?

Authorized visitors must follow these steps when planning to visit an MHS student. If appropriate steps are not met, the visit will be considered an unexcused absence and a violation of the *MHS Visitation Policy*. A loss of overnight weekend visiting privileges may occur.

1. Contact the student's houseparents a minimum of two (2) days in advance to schedule your visit.
2. When you arrive at the student home, meet first with a houseparent and sign the *Visitation Register*. Please update your contact information if it has changed, e.g., cell phone number, address, etc. ***Note: The houseparent may request identification. This is a precaution to ensure the safety of our students.***
3. Be sure to discuss the student's health or medical concerns that you will be responsible for during the visit, e.g., medication that needs to be taken.
4. As an authorized visitor, it is your responsibility to return the student to the student home on time. Be sure to check in with a houseparent upon your return, sign the *Visitation Register*, and return any health or medical items that were sent with the student.

***Remember:*** Only authorized visitors are permitted to pick up and return students to the student home. As an authorized visitor, you have full responsibility for the student during your visit. Parents/sponsors have ultimate accountability for the student.

## WEEKEND DAYTIME VISITING HOURS:

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Saturday 10:00 AM - 9:00 PM

Sunday 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

### MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Saturday 10:00 AM - 9:30 PM

Sunday 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

### HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Saturday 10:00 AM - 10:00 PM

Sunday 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

## May I attend the Sunday Chapel Service with my child?

Parents/sponsors and other authorized visitors are encouraged to attend the Sunday Chapel Service with their student. The Elementary Division service begins at 8:30 AM (must be seated by 8:25 AM) and is held in the Memorial Hall Auditorium. Chapel Service for Middle and Senior Division students begins at 9:00 AM and is held in the Founders Hall Auditorium (must be seated by 8:50 AM).

Parents/sponsors are encouraged to sit with their child and the student home family. All Chapel visitors should give prior notification to the houseparents. Visitation may begin after the visitor returns to the student home and signs the *Visitation Register*.

## What is the policy for overnight weekend visitation?

Students are permitted five (5) overnight weekend visits during the school year after Labor Day weekend. To help students adjust to the new school year, overnight visits are not permitted on Labor Day weekend.

Overnight stays during Family Weekends which begin on Saturday do not count toward the allotted five (5) overnight weekend visits provided the student checks in with their houseparents by 8:50 AM Sunday and attends the Chapel Service, dressed in MHS Chapel clothing.

Parents/sponsors must authorize all overnight weekend visits, including those with MHS employees. Only individuals on the *Visitors Roster* are eligible for overnight visitation with a student.

Students may leave campus for overnight weekend visits beginning at 4:00 PM on Friday afternoon. **Note: Students must complete all responsibilities before leaving campus.**

Students must return to the student home by 5:00 PM Sunday. On long weekends during which Monday is a holiday, students are expected to return to their student home by 5:00 PM Monday.

The use of taxi service will be limited to those students who are able to travel as an unaccompanied minor unless he or she is traveling with a Senior Division sibling.

Limitations to weekend overnight visits may occur throughout the year and will be communicated by the Home Life office.

## How do I arrange an overnight weekend visit?

To arrange an overnight weekend visit with an authorized visitor, follow these steps. If appropriate steps are not met, the visit will be considered an unexcused absence and a violation of the *MHS Visitation Policy*. A loss of overnight weekend visiting privileges may occur.

1. A parent/sponsor completes the *Request for Overnight Weekend Visitation* form, which can be found in the *MHS Community Calendar* or on the School's website: [www.mhs-pa.org/parents/information/forms](http://www.mhs-pa.org/parents/information/forms)
2. **Return the form to the houseparents no later than five (5) days prior to the planned weekend overnight visit.** Requests received fewer than five (5) days prior to the planned visit must be approved by the Home Life administrator.
3. The houseparent receives and approves the overnight visit. The form is placed in the student home files.

## What is the policy for holiday break visitation?

Authorized visitors must follow the procedures for overnight weekend visiting when planning visits during holiday breaks. If appropriate steps are not met, the visit will be considered an unexcused absence and a violation of the *MHS Visitation Policy*. A loss of overnight weekend visiting privileges may occur.

Students serving Level III and IV detentions will not be permitted an approved visitation with anyone, including parents/sponsors. Please note the following special circumstances:

- If a detention period abuts the Thanksgiving or Easter break, students must serve the detention before they will be dismissed for the break.
- If a detention period falls at the end of the school year, students must serve the detention before they will be dismissed for Summer break. During that time, students must be enrolled in an appropriate YRE program.
- If a detention period falls at the beginning of the Christmas break, students may complete the detention upon conclusion of the Christmas break.
- Students may be released from detention periods early only with the approval of the Home Life administrator due to extenuating circumstances.

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## What are the rules for student visits with Milton Hershey School staff members?

Milton Hershey School promotes active, ongoing relationships between students and the adults who work at MHS. All MHS staff members must follow the same guidelines as other authorized visitors with the exception of daytime visits. Parent/sponsor approval is not required for daytime visits with MHS staff members. Daytime visits with MHS staff members must be approved by the Home Life administrator.

Houseparents will consider student home schedules and any student responsibilities when coordinating visitation with MHS staff members.

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