



Mayo Elementary School

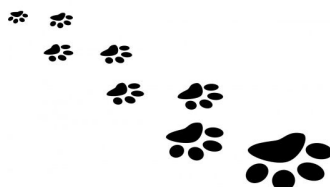
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Telephone: 508 829-3203
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Student/Parent Handbook 2020-2021

Mrs. Liz Garden , Principal
Mrs. Laura Ramos, Assistant Principal

At Mayo Elementary, we are proud of a culture that develops strong learners and future citizens by helping students:

Prepare for Learning
Act with Kindness
Work Hard
Show Leadership



If you need this booklet translated, please contact the main office of your child's school.

Portuguese/Português

Se você necessitar este livreto traduzido, contate por favor o escritório principal da escola da sua criança.

Spanish/ Español

Si usted necesita este librete traducido, entre en contacto con por favor la oficina principal de la escuela de su niño.

French/ Français

Si vous avez besoin de ce livret traduit, entrez en contact avec svp le bureau principal de l'école de votre enfant.

German/ Deutsch

Wenn Sie diese übersetzte Broschüre benötigen, treten Sie bitte mit dem Hauptbüro der Schule Ihres Kindes in Verbindung.

Russian/ Р у с с к о

Если вы этот переведенный буклет, то пожалуйста контактируйте главный офис школы вашего ребенка.

Korean/한국어

너가 번역되는 이 소책자를 필요로 하면, 너의 아이 학교의 본사를 접촉하십시오.

Chinese/汉语

如果您需要这本小册子被翻译, 请与您的儿童的学校大会办公处联系。

Japanese/日本語

翻訳されるこの小冊子を必要とすれば あなたの子供の学校の主要なオフィスに連絡しなさい。

Hindi/ihndi

Agar Aapko yah puistka ki Anauvaaidt AavaSyakta ho tba kRpyaa Apano baccao ko ivaValaya ka mau#ya kayaa-laya sampk- kiryao .

Polish/Polski

Jeśli potrzebujesz tej broszury przetłumaczone, skontaktuj się z głównego urzędu Twoje dziecko w szkole.

Greek

Αν χρειάζεστε το φυλλάδιο αυτό μεταφράστηκε, παρακαλούμε επικοινωνήστε με την κύρια έδρα του σχολείου του παιδιού σας.

Italian/Italia

Se hai bisogno di questo opuscolo tradotto, si prega di contattare l'ufficio principale del vostro bambino scuola.

Arabic

المكتب الرئيسية من طفانك مدرسة. اتصل ب إن أنت تحتاج هذا كراس يترجم, رجاء

Dear Mayo Families,

Welcome to the Wachusett Regional School District! We are excited for your family to become part of the Mayo Elementary School community. We hope you will find this guide helpful in answering questions about our expectations and procedures in elementary school. At Mayo, we strive to meet the district's mission to "provide excellence in teaching, learning, and social development so that all students can realize their highest potential as responsible and productive citizens."

The elementary school years are crucial for establishing a strong foundation for each child. The home-school partnership is very important in providing a learning atmosphere where our children can persevere, demonstrate leadership skills, and be their best. We hope you and your children feel welcome at Mayo School and encourage you to be an active part of our community.

Please feel free to reach out and connect with the teachers in the building, as well as with the office staff. We all want to work together to give every child in our school an amazing educational opportunity.

This handbook will help you navigate Mayo's programs and policies. Our links on the website will provide additional information. Please feel free to contact our office with any questions.

Looking forward to a great year at Mayo School!

Sincerely,

Liz Garden
Principal

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General Information

School Administrative Offices

Phone numbers and contacts:

School Telephone (508) 829-3203

All school personnel can be reached through email at the address `firstname_lastname@wrsd.net`

Principal, Mrs. Liz Garden

Assistant Principal, Mrs. Laura Ramos

School Secretary, Mrs. Lindsay Dupuis

School Nurse, Mrs. Laurie Coe, RN

Psychologist, Mrs. Lynn Wood

The main office at Mayo serves as the center for a wide range of important activities, and is the communication link between home and school. If you need to leave a message for any member of the faculty or staff, please call the main office and the message will be delivered. Lessons will not be interrupted for non-school matters or business that can be taken care of at home unless there is an emergency or critical issue. Please make every effort to plan ahead so that learning is not disrupted.

When your child's daily plans change, you must send a written note to your child's teacher or our school secretary. Our secretary, Ms. Rauh, coordinates all information about daily activities, maintains school records including attendance and early dismissals, and facilitates the flow of information throughout the school.

School Hours and General Schedule

Students enter the building at 8:50. School begins at 9:00, and dismissal is at 3:30.

Holden Rec Department runs a program before and after school. Hours begin at 7:30 and run after school until 6:00. This program is completely run by the Rec Department. For more information, please contact Denise Morano through their website.

In general, students have 5 specials during the week: art, music, physical education, and library. A fifth activity block provides movement and music and/or chorus. Students have thirty minutes for lunch and thirty minutes for recess. Lunch will be served on half days.

Please see the district calendar for winter and spring vacation dates, professional development days and half days, and national holidays.

MCAS testing will occur between April 2 and May 25. This is subject to minor changes according to the state's direction. Specific dates for each grade, 3 - 5, will be distributed later in the year. Please keep this in mind as you plan appointments.

Arrival and Dismissal

Walkers cross Bullard Street with the crossing guard and use the path beside the school, then enter the building through the front doors. At the end of the day, walkers meet our two crossing guards in the front foyer and are dismissed with them through the front door. They accompany students to Bullard St and cross them safely there.

Bus riders are delivered to the front of the school. Arrival is monitored by a staff member, who checks with the driver about student behavior and bus safety. Dismissal is monitored by teachers until students board their bus.

Carpool students are dropped off and dismissed from the back of the school. Both arrival and dismissal are monitored by staff members. Drivers go around the circle behind the school, always staying to the right. Move forward as directed by the staff in charge. Students will be dismissed to you and may not rush. They must never get out of the car in the middle of the lane and may not cross traffic. Adults should remain in the car and follow all directions in order to provide for safety.

Children are not allowed to go home with another child without a written note from a parent. **Students are not permitted to change buses.** If a parent plans to pick up a bus-rider at dismissal time, the child should provide a note in the morning stating that the child should go to the carpool line at dismissal. **Please do not call the office for dismissal except in the case of an emergency.**

Attendance/Absences

It is imperative that children attend school regularly in order to fully benefit from their education. Absences impact students in many ways-- instruction is splintered so concepts are not well established, attitudes about learning can be compromised, and progress is hindered. Mayo has a good attendance record in general, and we thank you for your efforts getting children here **on time** each day. Of course, children who are sick and cannot function well should be kept at home until they have recuperated.

If your child is going to be out of school for the day, you must call the absent line first thing in the morning. This helps the teacher plan, and provide a safety check for your child/ren. If we do not receive a phone call from you explaining your child's absence, you will receive an automated phone call about your child's absence. It is **your responsibility to then call the school** and explain the absence.

Students who are absent must assume the responsibility for making up school work that was missed. It is recommended that parents request class assignments for a sick child to work on at home if absence exceeds more than one or two days. If a student is absent for a prolonged period of time, he/she will be given an adequate amount of time to make up the work. A note to the teacher must be received in the morning in order for a teacher to get work ready to be sent home or picked up at the school office at the end of the day. This can prevent a child from being overwhelmed by having to make up missed school work while trying to keep up with current assignments when s/he returns to school.

Please do not plan to take children out of school for vacations during the regularly scheduled school time. Make vacation plans early so that your vacations coincide with school vacations. Note that teachers are not required to provide work for an absence due to a family vacation, but can sometimes suggest activities to help students maintain academic progress.

If you are moving out of the Mayo district, please inform us of the final date your child will attend school here. We will also need your new address and the name and address of the next school your child will attend. Release forms must be signed by the parents so that school records may be forwarded to your new school. Copies of records will be sent to the school upon request.

Notes Regarding Absences, Tardiness, Early Dismissal

A note is required after a child has been absent, when a child is late, or when the parent wants a child to be dismissed early.

If children are to be sent home by other than normal means, a note from the parents is required. **The school will not dismiss your child to another person unless advised to do so by you in writing.**

Early dismissal of pupils is arranged through the office. If early dismissal is necessary, your child should bring a note from the parent in the morning stating the reason for dismissal and the time s/he is to be dismissed. The child will then be picked up at the office at the early dismissal time.

No-School, Delayed Opening and Early Dismissal

In case of **school cancellation**, a “No-School announcement” will be aired on the following stations: WORC 1310 AM, WSRS 96.0 FM, WTAG 580 AM, WBMX 98.5 FM, WEIM 1280 AM, and TV Channels 4, 5 and 7. The announcements will be aired beginning at approximately 6:15 A.M. In addition, a telephone service is used by the district to notify families of delays and cancellations. If you do not want to receive this phone call, please notify the school in writing by October 15th.

During the winter months, bad weather occasionally makes it necessary to delay the opening of school. **Delayed openings** will be announced on the stations mentioned above. If the announcement is for a delayed opening, students or their parents should continue listening to these radio stations for further announcements in case it is changed to a school cancellation for the day. Delays are for up to two hours. Delayed openings do not affect dismissal times.

Afternoon kindergarten classes are sometimes canceled due to weather. Please listen to your radio for PM Kindergarten cancellations.

In an emergency such as severe weather or boiler breakdown, school may be dismissed earlier than the regular closing time. It is very important that parents update student emergency forms with current information. We must always be able to reach an adult. Be sure your children know what to do in case of early dismissal.

Please do not call the radio stations or town officials regarding school cancellations.

Lunch and Food in School

Hot Lunch Program

Hot lunches are available daily, beginning on the first day of school, at a cost of \$3.00 per child, which includes milk. For those wishing to bring a lunch from home, milk is available for .60 per carton. A child may buy more than one carton if s/he chooses. Please note that the cost is subject to change after annual review. You may pre-pay for your child's lunches by going to our website www.wrsd.net/mayo under Cafeteria Lunch Prepayment.

Free/Reduced Hot Lunch

Forms for free and reduced lunch are available on-line on the Wachusett website at www.wrsd.net under Food Services.

Food in school

Due to food allergies and other health issues, **we do not distribute any food** other than through the cafeteria. No party food is permitted. Erasers, pencils, stickers, and other small non-food prizes are great for special events. Be sure to follow the teacher's directions about this. (Please understand that it is never necessary or expected that you contribute in this way.)

Snack

Children should bring a healthy snack to school each day. Fourth and fifth grade students are permitted to buy snacks and drinks at lunch. Children may not buy snacks for others, they are not allowed to share snacks, and teachers are not permitted to provide snacks due to allergies and health related issues.

Student Dress

Although Mayo does not have a formal dress code, parents are asked to monitor what their children wear to school, and to listen to weather reports so that students are dressed appropriately. Children are expected to observe a standard of cleanliness, which is important to the well-being and health of each child. Hats are not to be worn in the building but are permitted during outdoor gym class. It is recommended that rubber-soled shoes be worn in an effort to prevent students from slipping. For safety sake, flip flops should not be worn. Children should not wear clothing with slogans that may be offensive to others. These items have the potential to encourage disrespectful and undesired behavior at school. If the school administration finds clothing to be inappropriate or unsafe, parents will be notified to bring in a change of clothes.

Label all student belongings with your child's name and grade. This includes jackets, sweaters, hats, mittens, backpacks, and everything else they bring to school! It's remarkable how much ends up in a give away pile at the end of the year. We have a lost and found table outside the cafeteria. Please check it often.

Toys and electronic devices

Toys, stuffed animals, and electronic devices intended for play are not allowed in school except under special circumstances arranged by the teacher. These items are generally a distraction to the child bringing them in and to other children as well. In addition, the upset of something being lost or broken is distressing for everyone, and can become all-consuming. The school does not assume responsibility for items that are lost or stolen. It's best to label everything. Sports equipment is allowed with prior approval of the recess monitors.

Cell phones are often used as a safety measure for families. Students may not use their cell phones during school hours, and are discouraged from bringing them on a routine basis. The use of cell phones is permitted outside of school hours.

Academics

Report Cards and Conferences

For grade 3- 5, report cards are published quarterly on PowerSchool. In kindergarten through second grade, parent-teacher conferences are held for the first marking period. For the remaining three terms, report cards are issued on PowerSchool. Teachers and/ or parents may request conferences as needed during the school year. Please send a note directly to the teacher if you wish to schedule a conference.

Special Area Instruction

Art (Ms. Diane Feeley)

There is a dual philosophy to the art program:

(1) Art stands alone as an important basic educational area in its own right.

(2) It is an important integrating force with respect to other subject areas such as reading, math, science and social studies.

During art instruction, emphasis is placed on one or two art objectives at a time. Experiences with materials, techniques, and concepts are presented in a sequential order through the five grades. Watch our growth as artists on the hall displays outside the gym.

Music (Mrs. Hannah Popek)

The music program takes a multifaceted approach, emphasizing the enjoyment of music through singing and vocal development, playing instruments and musical games, and incorporating dance. Additional musical experiences promote skills that support academic development and provide a sense of school spirit and fun for all. Third graders are introduced to recorders, and third, fourth and fifth grade students perform in a school concert in the winter and again in the spring.

Physical Education (Mr. Dan Wilde)

Our phys ed program provides a range of activities allowing all children to participate, both as individuals and as part of a team. Fitness, fun, and sportsmanship are the key concepts that are emphasized during phys ed classes. Sneakers are a must for all gym classes. Hats may be worn when physical education classes are held outside. Regarding other clothing expectations, the children wear their regular school clothes. Classes are frequently scheduled outdoors in good weather and are held in the gym during the cold or inclement weather.

Library (Parent and volunteer run)

Our library houses reading and reference materials for all grades, and is used for read aloud story time, research, and general library instruction. Children are allowed to take a book for up to two weeks, under the teacher's direction. It is the responsibility of the children to see that books are properly taken care of at home and while in their possession. Parents are billed for lost or damaged materials.

Field Trips

Field trips serve as a supplement to the established Curriculum Frameworks being taught in the classrooms. All field trips are chaperoned by classroom teachers, and occasionally by parents and/or other staff members.

Parents wishing to chaperone field trips must be CORI checked. The CORI check must be through the Wachusett Regional School District. Forms are available on the Mayo website. Permission slips are sent home and must be completed and signed by the parent in order for a child to participate. Field trips involving an admission charge will be the responsibility of the parent unless paid for by the parents' group. No student will be excluded from a field trip due to financial hardship. Please contact the teacher or administration if paying the fees is at all difficult, and we will make arrangements for coverage.

Homework

Children are encouraged to continue their learning at home and in the community. Daily or weekly homework can be used to extend learning, and to provide skill practice and enrichment. Teachers will inform parents at the beginning of the year about the routines and expectations for homework completion. Parents provide valuable assistance to the education of your children by encouraging them to take pride in work that is neat and carefully completed. In general, you should expect that your children will be assigned daily reading and math practice. Additional homework involving projects, content related activities and service projects may also be assigned at times.

Including nightly reading, the following is an average amount of time your child should be spending on homework daily.

Grade K and 1	5 - 10 minutes
Grade 2	20 minutes
Grades 3	30 minutes
Grade 4	40 minutes
Grade 5	50 minutes

It is important to manage schedules for homework and out-of-school activities so that assignments are completed on time.

Some children will need more time to complete assignments, and from time to time assignments will be more extensive. If your child has given the homework a serious, focused attempt, and is still unable to complete it, write a note to the teacher stating the amount of time spent and explaining that the homework was attempted, though incomplete. It is recommended that you not exceed the time designation stated above (on average). Homework should not be a stressful time for your family. Contact your teacher if homework is a frequent challenge, or if you have any other questions or concerns.

If an emergency arises, and your child is unable to complete his/her homework, please write a note to the teacher explaining what has happened, and what plan is in place for completing the work. It is generally expected that the homework will be made up as soon as possible.

Incomplete homework can result in warnings, loss of privileges or choice times, and conferences at the request of either parent or teacher. Grading can be impacted when homework is not completed regularly.

Student Support Services

Chapter 766

This is a Massachusetts Law that became effective in September, 1974. It is designed to assist individuals between the ages of three and twenty-one who require support in order to accomplish tasks assigned in school. The areas of assistance relate to speech, vision, hearing, physical handicaps, learning disabilities, school adjustment issues, and a variety of problems that might require a home tutor. For further information regarding these services, please contact the school psychologist, Lynn Wood, resource teachers, Rebecca Berenson and Marianne Sanborn, Principal Liz Garden, or Assistant Principal Patricia Hurley.

Special Education Staff

The Special Education staff provides assessment and support services for students who have disabilities and who require specialized individual and small group instruction in order to make satisfactory progress in regular educational programs. Following testing, a team assembles to review testing and make recommendations for services. This team includes the team chair (Principal or Assistant Principal), parent, teacher, and all special education staff who tested the child. If warranted, recommendations are made for the formulation of an Individual Educational Plan (I.E.P) which outlines specific services to be implemented. Special educators and classroom teachers are responsible for following the plan, monitoring progress, and amending the plan as necessary to meet student learning needs.

School Psychologist

As a team member, the psychologist assists the staff in the assessment of students and contributes to the development of appropriate educational programming for students.

Speech

Students with speech and language difficulties may receive services as indicated by an IEP. A speech and language therapist is available to work primarily with children who have been evaluated through the 766 Program.

Screening for pre-school children

Parents may request preschool screening for their child (age 3 and above) if they believe there may be a possible learning issue. This evaluation could detect problems that may hinder the child's ability to learn. Parents should call the Special Education Office at the Superintendent's Office at 508 829-1670 X238 for more information and direction.

All children who will be entering the Kindergarten Program are screened in the spring before beginning school to determine school readiness in areas of cognition, gross and fine motor skills, and speech and language.

Conduct and Discipline

Philosophy of Discipline

Our district policy states: “The Wachusett Regional School District shall help students learn behavior patterns which will enable them to be responsible, contributing members of society. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in keeping with their level of maturity and act with due regard for their fellow students and supervisory authority. Students shall have a right to reasonable treatment from the school and its employees, and in turn, the school and its employees shall have a right to expect reasonable behavior from students.”

Discipline is an educational process in which students learn self-control, responsibility, and respect for oneself and others. Discipline in the school setting is intended to support learning, and involves consistent use of reasonable rules and expectations and logical consequences for misbehavior.

Our approach to discipline begins with creating a positive environment where goodwill and positive interactions are the norm, where there is tolerance for others, and where there is support for student progress through recognition of positive behaviors. At Mayo, we work with children to help them develop the capacity to understand how actions result in consequences for themselves and others. In this way we provide a safe, supportive environment where students can learn, feel valued, and can develop a sense of responsibility for their own behavior and academic progress. A problem solving approach involves the students in analyzing reasons for misconduct, outcomes, and next steps.

Behavioral Expectations

Order in a school leads to stronger teaching and learning. Students are reminded that they must adhere to a code of good behavior for their own benefit as well as for the benefit of others.

Students attending Mayo School are expected to:

1. Prepare for learning. Along with completing homework and having necessary materials each day, this involves having an attitude of positivity towards others and towards learning, and a willingness to try.
2. Act with kindness. Mayo students and teachers value the positive relationships among the members of this community and expect all to act with kindness in word and deed.
3. Work hard. In every activity, students are expected to give their best effort, to persevere, and to consistently set goals and establish a course for deeper learning.
4. Show leadership. Leadership can be shown through a number of positive actions such as quietly setting an example for productive engagement in work and socializing, taking risks with learning, taking a stand in order to support a peer or a cause, or volunteering for a project or job, for example.

Students attending Mayo School may not engage in the following activities during school time or during school sponsored activities:

1. Extreme disruption of class or school proceedings
2. Noncompliance that interrupts learning for others
3. Distribution of any literature in class without permission from the teacher

4. Behavior that interferes with the operation of the school, classroom, auditorium, cafeteria or school buses
5. Defacing, damaging, destroying, or stealing school or personal property
6. Bullying or teasing, including any act that is perceived as being a threat or a harmful act
7. Threatening bodily harm or harm to the property of other students and/or staff
8. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person
9. Possession of indecent literature
10. Possession of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco
11. Possession of dangerous weapons - or something that can be perceived as a dangerous object or weapon (i.e. sharp objects, knives)

Disciplinary Action

The principal will be responsible for administering behavioral consequences and following disciplinary guidelines at the school in accordance with District Policy and school procedures. School Committee policies relating to student discipline are included in this handbook.

Corrective actions for misbehaviors shall be commensurate with the severity of the misbehavior. Consideration shall be given to the:

- Age of the student;
- Mitigating circumstances;
- Previous behavior of the student; and
- Attitude of the student

Failure to comply with established discipline practices and procedures will result in the following, and may vary depending on factors such as severity and frequency of misbehavior:

- Verbal reprimand
- Loss of privilege.
- Parent notification
- Removal from class or activity
- Request for parent conference
- Possible in-school suspension at the discretion of the administration

Behavior in the Cafeteria

In order to provide a welcoming, warm lunch experience, students will:

- Enter quietly
- Maintain a low to moderate talking level
- Handle food in an appropriate manner
- Keep their hands to themselves
- Clean up after themselves

Behavior on the Playground

In order to provide a safe and fun recess experience for everyone, students will include others, play fair, respond to adult directions, and use materials respectfully.

Students are not permitted to:

- engage in physical roughness, including poking, kicking, fighting, hitting, bullying, teasing or excluding others
- carry one another (piggyback rides, etc.)
- swing too high or swing with more than one child on a swing at a time
- use foul language or call others names
- use baseball bats at recess
- engage in any contact sports (football, etc.)
- litter
- play near or with bicycles
- play near or around structural hazards including retention ditches

Behavior on the Bus

While waiting for the bus,

students should:

stay out of the road except when s/he must cross the street
wait in an orderly manner; rough behavior or running is inappropriate
line up off the road
approach the bus only when the driver has opened the door

students should not:

have any pre-schoolers accompany him/her to the bus stop
throw any objects, including stones and snowballs
trespass onto private property

While riding the bus

students should:

get on the bus quickly and be seated
listen carefully to the driver's instructions
remain in his/her seat at all times while on the bus
stay completely within the seat limits
use a low talking voice to talk with children who are sitting next to him/her
help keep the bus clean.

Note: Students may be expected to sit three in a seat

students should not:

swear or use abusive language
fight, bully, or tease on the bus
eat on the bus
extend hands, arms or heads out the window

Consequences for Misbehavior on the Bus

Misbehavior on the bus is categorized into three levels. The examples given are not exhaustive. Consequences may be dependent upon the severity and frequency of the misbehavior.

LEVEL 1: Includes misbehaviors that interfere with the orderly transportation of students. Some examples are:

- Talking too loudly
- Failure to stay seated
- Littering on the bus
- Tampering with the possessions of other passengers

Consequences

The bus driver may address the misbehavior through:

- A verbal warning issued to student
- Seat assignment

LEVEL 2: Includes more severe misbehaviors that interfere with the orderly transportation of students. Some examples are:

- Annoying and/or bullying other passengers
- Littering the bus – repeat offense
- Tampering with the possessions of other passengers – repeat offense
- Use of profanity
- Damage to the bus

Consequences

The bus driver reports misbehavior to the school officials. A “School Bus Conduct Report” will be completed by the bus driver and submitted to the bus company operations manager, who will then forward it to the appropriate school principal/assistant principal for action. The principal or designee and the bus company will retain copies of the signed report.

In some cases, students may report passenger misconduct. If so, the student should report the misconduct to his or her teacher or an administrator. The principal or designee administers appropriate consequences.

LEVEL 3: Includes behavior that endangers the safety of the driver or students and which impairs the driver’s ability to safely operate the bus. Some examples include:

- Repeated occurrences of Level 1 or 2 behaviors
- Refusal to remain in seats
- Throwing objects, spitting, or spit balls
- Distracting the driver
- Refusal to obey driver
- Fighting, including pushing and/or wrestling
- Lighting matches/lighters
- Possession of knives or other dangerous objects
- Possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances

Consequences

The bus driver reports misbehavior to the school officials. A "School Bus Conduct Report" will be completed by the bus driver and submitted to the bus company operations manager, who will then forward it to the appropriate school principal/assistant principal for action. The principal or designee and the bus company will retain copies of the signed report. Disciplinary action may include:

- Loss of bus privileges or suspension from the bus for up to ten days
- Permanent suspension from bus privileges.
- At more severe levels, the superintendent or designee may be involved.
- Illegal activity will be referred to the Police Department.

Safety

School and Bus Evacuation Drills and Safety Plans

Safety drills are held regularly to ensure that students and staff understand the procedures to use in any emergency. Students are instructed by their teachers in understanding signals, exit procedures and routes, where and how to assemble, and how to return to the building. Periodic checks by our fire and police departments are conducted throughout the year. In addition, a safety plan for potential threats and critical incidents has been established by our district, and is reviewed with faculty yearly. The plan is reviewed by our police and fire departments.

School Bus Evacuation Drills are held annually in conjunction with the school bus contractors.

In order to let parents know that these safety checks have occurred, an effort is made to send an email notification before students arrive at home that day.

Bicycle Policy

Only children in Grades 4 and 5 are allowed to ride their bicycles to and from school. However, considering the amount of traffic on Bullard Street and in our school lot during arrival and dismissal, it is strongly recommended that parents consider the safety of allowing your child/ren to ride their bikes to school. Massachusetts law requires children 12 years and under to wear a properly fitted and fastened helmet at all times. (School Committee Policy P6411) Students are required to follow the rights and duties of a bicyclist as set forth in Mass. G.L. Chpt. 85 sect. 11B. Bike riders must walk their bikes across Bullard St. with the crossing guards and then walk down the walkers' path. **Students may not ride their bikes down the path** because it creates a hazard for the walkers on the path. A bike lock is recommended since the school is not responsible for stolen bikes.

The privilege of riding a bicycle to school will be taken away at anytime if the child does not follow safety procedures or is being harmful to other students.

Health

School Nurse, Laurie Coe, RN 508-829-1670 X105

Students who become ill or injured during school hours will be directed to the school nurse for assessment, evaluation, treatment and/or referral. If the nurse is not available, students will report to the office. Parents will be notified when a child must be sent home. If the parent cannot be contacted, the person indicated on the Emergency Card will be called. It is imperative that the Emergency Card be completed annually and updated as necessary.

Vision and Hearing Screening

All students are screened annually for vision and hearing, though this is not a complete diagnostic test. Parents will be notified if screening procedures identify possible problems.

Exclusion From School Activities Due to Health Related Concerns

Students are expected to participate in all aspects of our school program. It is expected that all children go outside for recess in a range of weather. If for health reasons a child must be excluded from any activity, we request written verification from a doctor as well as a note allowing him/her to return to regular routines.

Administration of Medication

Administration of any medication (both prescription and nonprescription) by our school nurse is by written order of the provider with written permission from the parent/guardian. Permission to administer non-prescription medications is provided on the emergency contact forms, which are signed by the parent and held in the nurse's office. **Medication must be brought to the school by the parent/guardian or other designated responsible adult in the original container with the label intact. Students are not to transport medication to and from school.**

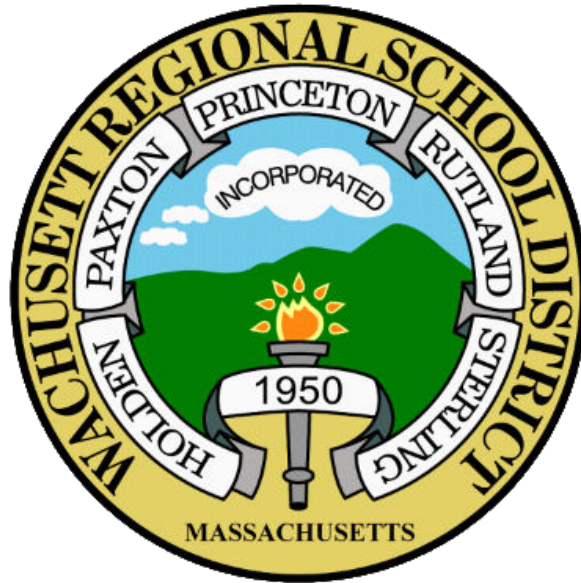
Kindergarten Enrollment

In the Wachusett School District, **a child must be five years of age by August 31 in order to attend Kindergarten in our schools.** Kindergarten registration is conducted in February, and is done in each individual school. The following must be brought to the registration appointment:

- Birth Certificate (it is later returned to the parents)
- Record of all immunizations
- Completed registration forms, which can be obtained online or in the school office

Parents/guardians should inform the school of any additional information that might affect the child's ability to function effectively in school.

WRSD Student Handbook Addendum



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WRSD Nondiscrimination Statement

The Wachusett Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ELL status, housing status, or other protected status in the operation of the educational programs, activities, or employment policies, and no person will be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to its public schools, or in obtaining advantage and privileges in regards to courses of study and extracurricular programs of such public schools on account of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ELL status, housing status or other protected category.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

Mohandas Gandhi

Evidence-based research gleaned from respected institutions, media reports, and the hallways of our nation's schools all point to the same truth: Bullying has devastating effects. Just a quick look at statistics reveals the depth of the problem:

- Analysis of high-profile school shootings such as Santana, Columbine, and Virginia Tech reveals that that up to 71 percent involved attacker(s) who felt bullied, persecuted, attacked, or injured.
- Around 160,000 school children stay home from school each day out of fear, often without telling their parents why.
- Children targeted by bullies experience higher than normal levels of insecurity, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and physical and mental symptoms.
- Adults who were bullies as children have higher rates of substance abuse, domestic violence, and other violent crimes.
- The percentage of students who report being bullied rose 50% from 1983 to 2003.
- Approximately 1 in 5 students experience bullying at school, and approximately 7% of students experience cyberbullying a school year.

In short, bullying is an act that cannot be ignored if we are to safeguard our nation's schools and young people.

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT CORE VALUES

Commitment to Excellence

- Modeling effective teaching that engages and meets the needs of all students
- Providing a rigorous curriculum with expanding options and opportunities for all
- Recruiting and retaining excellent staff

Perseverance

- Tenacity and hard work
- Persisting in the face of obstacles
- Focusing on goals

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing, evaluating, and problem solving
- Thinking creatively
- Being adaptive

Collaboration

- Listening and communicating effectively
- Maximizing strengths and respecting differences
- Cooperating to reach common ground

Global Citizenship and Responsibility

- Celebrating diversity while recognizing commonalities
- Demonstrating civic respect by giving back to the communities
- Developing student's leadership skills for success in a global society

Creativity and Innovation

- Respecting the diversity of thoughts and ideas
- Embedding the arts into content areas
- Thinking freely, not fearing mistakes

Acceptance and Respect of Others

- Demonstrating tolerance
- Fostering a community of teamwork and collaboration
- Creating an atmosphere of safety and acceptance

OUR BELIEFS

THE WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT:

- seeks to ensure meaningful student growth and promote social emotional well-being in a safe and nurturing environment.
- is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation.
- recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics.
- expects every member of the extended school community to take all forms of bullying seriously, to work to prevent it, and to report it when it is thought to have occurred.
- in a manner consistent with laws and regulations, will investigate all reported incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation in a timely, fair and discreet manner while being respectful of individual rights.
- when resolving verified incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, will proceed in a manner that stresses education and skill building.

DEFINITIONS:

Bullying -The repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

- (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his/her property;
- (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
- (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber-bullying: Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Hostile Environment: A situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the target's education.

Target / Victim: A student who has been subject to bullying or retaliation by another student or group of students.

Aggressor/ Perpetrator: A student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages, either individually, or as part of a group, in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.

Local law enforcement agency: local police department

Principal: The administrative leader of a school in the Wachusett Regional School District or his/her designee for the purposes of investigating and responding to reports of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

Retaliation: Intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

LEADERSHIP:

A. District Bullying and Cyberbullying Statement

The WRSD Leadership is committed to implementing the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and in conjunction with community efforts, to promote and ensure a safe and positive teaching and learning environment. District leaders, community leaders, teachers, parents, guardians and student leaders, have a primary role in teaching students to regard one another in a respectful, civil, and dignified manner to create an environment that improves and sustains the behavioral health of all students. These stakeholders will promote understanding and respect for diversity and differences in all venues through modeling respectful behavior and promoting and sustaining a commitment to programs that are focused on supporting social-emotional development at all grade levels. The WRSD will provide age-appropriate anti-bullying educational experiences for all students in the district. As a school district, WRSD will enhance student achievement by creating and maintaining an educational environment where all students feel safe and in the unlikely event that a student feels uncomfortable, he or she will not be reluctant to communicate his/her concerns to teachers, staff, administrators, parents or guardians.

B. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the WRSD Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was developed by a committee consisting of district and building based administrators, teachers, and a school psychologist. Prior to the presentation of this plan to the School Committee, a final draft of the plan was made available on the WRSD website for Public Comment. A schedule will be set up to review the Plan by a committee on an annual basis. This will ensure that the plan is always updated and that behavioral health initiatives that support anti-bullying are instituted throughout the district in an effective, deliberate and sustaining manner.

C. Implementation

Consistent with applicable laws and regulations, all Principals will be implementing (with the support of the Superintendent and/or the School

Committee), the following documents/ action plans:

- Create narrative and graphic documents showing end-to-end process and procedures for all types of bullying/cyberbullying incidents
- Receive and investigate reports on Bullying
- Plan intervention support strategies that meet the needs of the targets, aggressors and retaliators involved in the reported incidents
- Choose and implement a Bully Prevention Curricula that each school will use
- Review, and where necessary, update District student and staff handbooks, and code of conduct
- Lead parent, guardian and family engagement efforts by providing appropriate informational materials for this group
- Collect and analyze building and district-wide data on past bullying incidents to understand trends and patterns, define the present problem, and create a baseline from which to measure improved outcomes
- Create a Records Retention Plan for incidents

POLICY JURISDICTION

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

1. on school grounds, on property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, at a function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or bullying school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district or a school; and
2. at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. As stated in M.G.L. c.71 Sec.370 nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

WRSD will investigate bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation incidents in a fair, timely, and thorough manner while being mindful of personal privacy rights and the stigma that a student may occur from being labeled in some way or another. Verified incidents of bullying, in all of its forms will be dealt with firmly. Dispositions will begin with education and, when deemed necessary, will move to progressively sterner measures.

A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation Requirements:

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member will be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. When reporting in writing, administrators, teachers, parents, school bus drivers, cafeteria workers, playground monitors, and any and all other staff and community members can access the "Bullying, Cyber-bullying, Retaliation

Incident Referral Form” in the Main Office of the school, guidance/school psychologist’s office, the nurse’s office, the Wachusett Regional School District

1. Reporting by Staff:

A staff member will promptly report to the principal or designee any instances of bullying or retaliation witnessed by the staff member or that is reported to the staff member by a student, parent, or other individual and then follow up with an Incident Referral Form. The requirement to notify the principal shall not, however, limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline. (see Appendix A for reporting form)

2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others:

In an effort to keep its students safe, the Wachusett Regional School District believes that it is the responsibility of students, parents, guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Any individual who wishes to file such a complaint may request, and shall be provided with, assistance from a school staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The filing of a false or fabricated complaint of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is strictly prohibited and shall result in disciplinary action. (see Appendix A for reporting forms)

B. Responding to Report of Bullying, Cyberbullying or Retaliation- Allegations of Bullying by a Student

1. Safety

Once an initial report of bullying or retaliation has been brought to the attention of school personnel, the designated school personnel will take appropriate action(s) to maintain a sense of safety for all parties involved in the report, including the target, the aggressor and the reporting party (if it is a student). Once designated school personnel have made a determination regarding the validity of the report, additional steps and modifications will be made to keep students safe. In creating a safety plan appropriate accommodations may be indicated to limit the interaction between the target and the aggressor throughout the course of the school day. This would include but is not limited to, the classroom setting, the cafeteria, recess and school bus seating assignment. The Principal or his/her designee will implement safeguards to ensure that all students involved in the incident are protected during the course of the investigation process. All students will be reminded by the Principal or his/her designee that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

2. Investigation

- The Principal or his/her designee will promptly investigate all reports of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all

available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

- The Principal or his/her designee will determine if police interaction is deemed necessary.
- During the investigation, the Principal or his/her designee will interview students, staff, witnesses and parents or guardians.
- The Principal or his/her designee will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.
- Interviews will be conducted by the Principal or his/her designee, in consultation with the school counselor as necessary.
- To the extent practicable, the Principal or his/her designee will maintain confidentiality throughout the investigative process and will maintain a written record of the investigation.
- Procedures for investigating reports of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal or his/her designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

3. Determinations

If the incident is verified to be bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, a meeting will be arranged by the school official with the aggressor and the aggressor's parents or guardians. In the meeting, it will be made clear to both the aggressor and the parents or guardians that bullying, cyberbullying and/or retaliation will not be tolerated in the Wachusett Regional School District. A meeting may also take with the target and the target's parents or guardians. Depending on the level of the incident, local authorities may be informed of such incident(s) and the school will follow the recommendation from local authorities in resolving the continued behavior of the aggressor.

4. Responses to Bullying / Consequences from Findings

Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in its level of seriousness and what impact it has on the target and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of "bullying," as defined in this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, will generally warrant disciplinary action against the aggressor, whether and to what extent disciplinary actions are imposed (e.g., detention, suspension, etc.) is a matter for the professional discretion of the building Principal or his/her designee. No disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint. District administrators will integrate a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. The needs and safety of the target will also be considered as part of restoring resolution to the bullying matter. Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the building Principal or his/her designee and will address the acts of the aggressor and the needs of the target, and assure the sanction against bullying behavior is enforced with the goal that the bullying behavior will cease and desist.

Consequences should consider these specific issues:

- a. Nature, severity, and chronicity of the behavioral impact on the target
- b. Degree of physical, psychological, social harm on the target
- c. Student's age, development and degree of maturity
- d. Surrounding circumstances and context in which the incident(s) occurred
- e. Prior disciplinary history and continuing patterns of behavior
- f. Relationship between and among the parties involved
- g. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred
- h. The need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.

The appropriate range of consequences, subject to due process where appropriate, may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Report to law enforcement
- b. Expulsion
- c. Referral to outside agency
- d. Reassignment of classes
- e. Reassignment of seats in lunch, bus, class, etc.
- f. Out-of-school suspension
- g. In-school suspension
- h. Detention
- i. Loss of privileges (including before and after school activities)
- j. Temporary removal from the classroom
- k. Verbal reprimand

In addition, instructional activities designed to develop the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying and/or retaliatory behaviors will be given, which may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Reparation to the target
- b. Completion of curricular based assignment(s)
- c. Meeting with Civil Rights Coordinator
- d. Completion of community service designed to help the aggressor understand and respect differences; written report required by the aggressor
- e. Therapeutic support for both aggressor and targets

5. Notification Obligation

- **Notice to Parents or Guardians**
Once an assessment of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation has been made and been deemed valid, the Principal or his/her designee will immediately inform the parent(s) or guardian of the target and the aggressor of the incident. At this time, parents/guardians will also be informed of the investigation and disciplinary procedures that may follow. There may be incidents where parents are notified prior to the Investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
- **Notice to Another School or District**
If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special

education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Principal or his/her designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

- **Notice to Law Enforcement**

At any point after receiving and/or investigating a report of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, if the Principal or his/her designee has determined that the incident has elevated to a level that is believed to be criminal in nature, charges may be pursued against the aggressor. The Principal will notify the local law enforcement agency of said incident. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Principal or his/her designee will contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has reasonable evidence to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. In making this determination, the Principal will, (consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures), consult with the School Resource officer, or other individuals he/she deems appropriate.

ACADEMIC AND NON ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Wachusett Regional School District seeks to create a safe, respectful and caring school and classroom environment for all students regardless of their race, color, national origin, creed, religion, gender or gender identity, sex or sexual orientation, age, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, family situation or disability. WRSD will lay the foundation for a positive school climate in pre-school and will continue to teach, nurture, and positively reinforce pro-social behavior throughout students' academic experiences.

- Each grade level will be provided developmentally appropriate and evidenced-based curriculum and instruction to teach pro-social skills such as conflict resolution, cooperation, assertiveness, communication, expressing feelings, problem solving, cyber safety, and appreciation for diversity.
- The entire school community (e.g. students, teachers, parents, bus drivers, lunchroom staff, janitorial staff, etc.) will work collaboratively to promote a caring and supportive school environment among all of its staff and students.

Non-Academic Bullying Prevention Efforts:

- Administration will review student behavioral expectations during grade level assemblies during the first week of school.
- The definition of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation and the protocol for handling incidents of bullying will be emphasized.
- Staff presence will be increased in areas where bullying is most likely to occur; (i.e.) bus arrival and departure locations, hallways, lunchrooms, recess, and near restrooms.
- A variety of evidence - based prevention programs to promote diversity awareness and respect for self and others will be explored and offered. District schools currently use the following programs: Second

Step, Responsive Classroom, MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center), and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) (See Appendix B for full descriptions of these programs)

- Schools will encourage student involvement in school events and extra-curricular activities to reduce isolation and the likelihood of becoming a target of bullying (i.e. Student Council)

Academic Bullying Prevention Efforts:

- Educating students on the life skills and competences for Social and Emotional Learning (Domain 5, Wachusett Regional School District Strategic Plan)
- Meaningful relationships between staff and students will be fostered so that every student will have at least one supportive adult to share concerns with, enhancing their feeling of safety in the school.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A key aspect of promoting a positive school climate is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. Below is a summary of strategies aimed to provide supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the district's capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation, these services will be available to reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and to provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors. School-based counselors are available to all students for counseling. The Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services will regularly update a list of mental health resources available in the community and provide this list to all schools. School administrators, staff, and parents will collaborate in determining appropriate referral services.

A. Identifying resources.

WRSD will annually review its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. This will include a review of current staffing and programs that foster positive school culture as well as identifying any gaps in services and resources that need to be addressed. Principals will respond to the needs of their individual schools in order to assess existing and needed resources.

B. Counseling and other services

The District will work collaboratively with school mental health staff and outside agencies to maintain a list of providers that will support schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Schools may consider current tools including, but not limited to, behavioral intervention plans, restorative justice practices, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula.

C. Students with disabilities

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or that he/she may be vulnerable to bullying or harassment because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

D. Referral to outside services

Clear protocols that are part of the the WRSD Wellness Plan will help students and families access appropriate and timely services.

COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

Wachusett Regional School District recognizes the importance of collaboration with families in order to optimize the school's ability to prevent and respond to bullying. Our goal is to provide useful information and resources to parents/guardians of students, and to ensure sufficient channels of communication between the families and schools.

- Parent education and resources
- Notification requirements At the beginning of each school year, WRSD will inform parents/guardians of enrolled students of the policies and procedures for prevention and intervention of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation in its annual publication of the Student/Parent Handbook.
- Each school will inform parents and guardians about the anti-bullying curricula being used.
- In order to continually gain feedback from parents/guardians, a survey will be administered on an annual basis. This information will be very important to us as we continue to assess the effectiveness of our bullying policies/procedures.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF TRAINING

Under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O the Wachusett Regional School District must provide ongoing professional development for all staff, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals as well as providing opportunities for parent, guardians, and community members to participate in this anti-bullying/ cyber-bullying initiative.

All stakeholders in the Wachusett Regional School District must be made aware of the new state anti-bullying law and how it changes the definitions, reporting, investigation and punishment of bullying incidents. Our School Committee, administrators, and faculty will be responsible for disseminating this information and for projecting how these changes will

reflect on cultural changes in our schools as the implementation of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O moves forward.

Through training and professional development, the WRSD will seek to raise the overall level of mental health services in our district schools to decrease the number of bullying incidents that may take place. The district will focus on training and development programs that give staff the skills and understanding to create safer schools, not only to respond to the state mandate under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, but also to benefit our children and our community.

A. Annual staff training on the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

School- based annual training for all school staff by the building Principal or designee will include:

- Staff responsibilities under the new law
- An overview of the steps that the Principal or his/her designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation
- An overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grade levels throughout the district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year will be required to participate in this school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

B. Ongoing district- wide professional development.

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of the tools available for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build upon the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying incidents. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-wide and district-wide professional development, will be informed by research and will include information on:

- Effective and developmentally or age-appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- Developmentally or age-appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to bullying;
- Current research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- Current information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- Internet safety curriculum with reference to cyber-bullying as “unacceptable” behavior.

Professional development will also continue to address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects their social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the Wachusett Regional School District for professional development may include:

- Increasing the overall level of mental health services in our schools so that all students will experience kindness and compassion
- Making sure our classrooms and schools are psychologically safe for all students and staff
- Promoting a deeper understanding of respect so that our language and behavior reflects respect for everyone (modeling)
- Teaching tolerance and respect for the diversity and differences that exists in people
- Building rapport with the families of our community so that we all see the value of safe schools and are willing to support this new anti-bullying initiative
- Managing classroom behaviors so that we can break the cycle of nonproductive behavior
- Using intervention strategies which will allow all participants to refrain from aggressive behavior and see the real benefits of tolerance and respect
- Proactively teaching our students that actions come from the contents of our thoughts and that a big part of growing up is learning that we don’t have to act on all of our thoughts

C. Written notice to staff.

The school district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Sections related to staff

responsibilities will be included in the district employee handbook.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION

Under Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 amended Section 37O of chapter 71 of the General Laws, any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seek assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent's office.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies. In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

School Committee Policies

POLICY RELATING TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATION

Policy 1523 DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE PUBLICATIONS

The Wachusett Regional School District shall, in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws and Department of Education regulations, provide all publications as approved by the School Committee and required by the State Department of Education.

The School Committee Policy Book shall be made available for review to any person, upon request to the Superintendent's Office. Copies of said publications shall be placed in each of the five (5) Town Libraries and all school libraries. A nominal fee, not to exceed the cost of production, shall be charged to any person requesting a copy of one of the publications.

This policy shall be included in all Student Handbooks.

POLICY RELATING TO EDUCATION

Policy 3611.4 ENRICHMENT

The Wachusett Regional School Committee is committed to providing a high quality education for all students with the goal of maximizing the performance and achievement of every individual. Staff is encouraged and expected to use innovative teaching implementing the District curriculum in creative and flexible ways.

It is recognized that students possess a broad range of intellectual skills and creative talents that can be challenged by diverse and stimulating activities.

Wachusett Regional School District shall:

- provide opportunities for enriching activities appropriately accessible to all students;
- encourage and support staff attendance at professional development programs designed to promote the implementation of gifted and talented instructional strategies;
- promote the use of alternative strategies which may include, but are not limited to, cluster grouping, curriculum compacting, interest-based projects, independent studies, and teacher-pupil contracting, supported by appropriate classroom resources; and
- inform parents of the enriching activities available in the area of gifted education and promote parent/community involvement and participation.

This policy shall be referenced in each school's student handbook. In addition, school councils shall annually review the needs of gifted and talented students.

POLICY RELATING TO EDUCATION

Policy 3625 TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS

In accordance with state and federal law, the District shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention education programs in grades K-12.

The alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, with emphasis on nonuse by school-age children. The program also shall include information about effective techniques and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using, as well as skills for addressing peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

Prevention requires education, and healthy decision-making. The objectives of this program are:

- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug use among children and youth.
- To increase students' understanding of the legal, social, emotional, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.
- To teach students self-management skills, social skills, negotiation skills, and refusal skills that will help them to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.

The curriculum, instructional materials, and outcomes used in this program shall be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Wachusett Regional School District Committee.

This policy shall be posted on the District's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents/guardians in accordance with state law. Additionally, the District shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

POLICY RELATING TO PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Policy 5252 PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members in the Wachusett Regional School District. While ensuring safety in District schools, staff must recognize that students are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Physical restraint is an emergency measure of last resort and should be utilized only when necessary to protect a student and/or school community member from assault or imminent, serious physical harm. Restraint, including mechanical restraint, medication restraint, physical escort, physical restraint, prone restraint, seclusion and time-out are defined under 603 CMR 46.00. The Department of Elementary and Secondary

Education (DESE) defined inclusionary and exclusionary time-out in its Technical Assistance Advisory, SPED 2016-1, on 31 July 2015.

Chemical restraint, mechanical restraint, and seclusion are prohibited in all public school education programs. The District will follow the requirements for restraint outlined in 603 CMR 46.00, including requirements for safety, duration, follow-up, prone/floor restraints, reporting, administrative review and training. The District will adhere to the guidelines for time-out as outlined the DESE Technical Assistance Advisory, SPED 2016-1.

Neither 603 C.M.R. 46.00 nor this policy prohibits: (1) any teacher, employee or agent of the District from using reasonable force to protect students, others or themselves from imminent, serious, physical harm; (2) any individual from reporting to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual; (3) law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or (4) an individual from reporting neglect or abuse to the appropriate state agency, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119 § 51A.

The District will develop and implement specific written procedures that include: appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention, including methods to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide; alternatives to physical restraint; description of physical restraints used in emergency situations; restraint complaint procedure; restraint training and reporting requirements; restraint follow-up procedures; periodic review of restraint data procedures; procedures on the use of time-out as a behavioral support strategy; and methods to engage parents in discussion about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency measure.

The District will annually review its Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures, provide it to all District staff, and make it available to parents of enrolled students.

POLICIES RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES

Policy 6312 REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance is essential to the achievement of students in the Wachusett Regional School District. In accordance with Massachusetts State Law (MGL), parent/guardian has the responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

If the school does not receive a message from the parent/guardian by the designated time established by the school, then the school shall call to inquire about the student's absence. Parents will be contacted

within three (3) days of the student's absence if the parent/guardian has not contacted the school regarding the absence.

The parent/guardian will also be notified when a student has at least five days in which the student has missed two or more classes/periods (unexcused) or who has five or more unexcused absences in the school year. A meeting will be scheduled with the building principal (or his/her designee), the parent/guardian and the student to develop an action plan to improve the student's attendance.

Legal Refs: Chapter 222 of the Acts of 2012, Chapter 76, Section 1B

Policy 6400 BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

The Wachusett Regional School District shall help students learn behavior patterns which will enable them to be responsible, contributing members of society. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in keeping with their level of maturity and act with due regard for their fellow students and supervisory authority. Students shall have a right to reasonable treatment from the school and its employees and, in turn, the school and its employees shall have a right to expect reasonable behavior from students.

The principal will be responsible for administering behavior and discipline procedures at the school in accordance with District policy and school procedures. In order to assure that all students and staff are made aware of their specific rights and responsibilities, a student handbook shall be developed by each school, which defines the rights and responsibilities of students and others whose actions affect student behavior. References to all School Committee policies relating to student discipline will be included in the student handbook.

Corrective actions for misbehaviors outlined in the handbook shall be commensurate with the severity of the misbehavior. Consideration shall be given to the following:

1. age of the student;
2. mitigating circumstances;
3. previous behavior of the student; and
4. attitude of the student.

Student Handbook. The student handbook shall be reviewed annually with input sought from the school council. The student handbook shall be printed and distributed to all enrolled students and all staff members at the start of each school year. The student handbook shall include, but not be limited to, sections dealing with:

1. student rights and responsibilities;
2. student behavior and discipline; and
3. glossary of terms.

Each building principal shall be responsible for providing orientation to the handbook to all enrolled students and all staff members at the start of the school year. The provisions of the student handbook shall be applied to students in a standardized, nondiscriminatory and non-arbitrary manner.

Liability for Damages. The Wachusett Regional School District shall seek compensation for District property willfully damaged by a minor or student age 18 years or older. Civil action may be brought against the minor or his/her parents, or the individual if 18 years of age or older. All incidents shall be investigated, liabilities fixed, and all costs assessed in a nondiscriminatory and non-arbitrary manner. Schools shall be monitored to ensure that findings of liability are in accordance with District procedures in affording due process guarantees.

Corporal Punishment. Corporal punishment is prohibited. Staff shall develop alternative techniques for managing student discipline in accordance with District policy.

Searches. Wachusett Regional School District authorities may exercise their rights to conduct an inspection of student lockers and/or desks. A student shall not misuse lockers and desks assigned by school authorities. Lockers and desks remain, at all times, the property of the District.

A warrant-less search (non-emergency) of a student's school locker or articles carried upon the student's person, may be conducted if there is a reasonable suspicion that the search is necessary to protect the health and/or safety of students and staff, or to detect a violation of school rules. Such a search may be conducted if school authorities suspect that a student possesses such items as, but not limited to, weapons, dangerous instruments, stolen goods, narcotics, hallucinogenics, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, unregistered drugs, controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, or evidence of cheating or other academic misconduct.

Student Suspensions. The Wachusett Regional School District shall ensure that each pupil has an atmosphere and an environment which is conducive to teaching and learning. To that end, schools shall maintain programs which maximize opportunities for learning and minimize disruptions to the educational process. The District's first concern shall be to help maintain pupils in school so that their learning process is not interrupted.

Students who create discipline problems which cannot be resolved through less severe means shall be suspended. As a last resort, the District shall, at the discretion of the school principal, and following the required due process, deny a pupil the right to attend school for a period not to exceed ten (10) days. The principal's decision is final.

Students will have the right and the responsibility to complete all assignments and make up all tests missed during the suspension. It will be the student's responsibility to confer with teachers and to complete make-up work within a reasonable time but in no instance exceeding three weeks after the suspension expires.

Expulsion. Expulsion shall be considered an action of last resort when the behavior of the student warrants such action at the discretion of the school principal. The expulsion shall be governed by Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 71, sections 37h and 37h1/2, and Ch. 76 section 17

Policy 6431.1 TOBACCO PRODUCTS ON SCHOOL PREMISES PROHIBITED

Use of any tobacco products, including, but not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, chewing

tobacco, pipe tobacco and snuff and electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic pipes or other similar products that rely on vaporization or aerosolization, within school buildings, school facilities, on school grounds or school buses, or at school-sponsored events by any individual, including, but not limited to, school personnel and students, is prohibited at all times.

A staff member determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code.

This policy shall be promulgated to all staff and students in appropriate handbook(s) and publications.

Signs shall be posted in all school buildings informing the general public of the District policy and requirements of state law.

Policy 6433.1 ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE BY STUDENTS PROHIBITED

A student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy or sell, or give away: any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product, including vapor/E-cigarettes; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance except for prescribed medical purposes within any school or on school grounds at any time. The Wachusett Regional School District Committee (WRSDC) also prohibits the use or consumption by students of the aforementioned on school grounds or school buses, or at any school-sponsored event.

Additionally, any student who is under the influence of drugs or alcoholic beverages prior to, or during, attendance at or participation in a school-sponsored activity, will be barred from that activity and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Verbal Screening

- The school district shall utilize, in accordance with law, a verbal screening tool approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to screen students for substance abuse disorders. The tool shall be administered by trained staff on an annual basis at grades 7 and 10.
- Parents/guardians shall be notified of the screening prior to the opening of school each year. Parents/guardians shall have the right to opt out of the screening by written notice prior to or during the screening.
- All statements made by a student during a screening are confidential and shall not be

disclosed except in the event of immediate medical emergency or in accordance with law. De-identified results shall be reported to the Department of Public Health within 90 days of the completion of the screening process.

This policy shall be posted on the District's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents/guardians of this policy in accordance with state law. Additionally, the District shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

Policy 6434 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Wachusett Regional School Committee to provide an educational environment free of sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct or communications constituting sexual harassment as defined by this policy and law. Sexual harassment violates the policies of the District and also violates federal and state law, specifically Title IX and Massachusetts General Laws, C. 151C.

It will be a violation of this policy for any student to be sexually harassed by or to sexually harass another student, any employee or volunteer or other person connected with the District through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined by this policy. Retaliation against a student for filing a complaint, under this policy or for assisting in an investigation of sexual harassment is in violation of this policy.

DEFINITION:

The legal definition of sexual harassment is:

Unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's success as a student;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis of educational decisions affecting such individual(s); or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's educational performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Sexual harassment may include the following types of activities, but is not limited to these examples:

- Touching (arm, breast, buttocks, shoulders, etc.)
- Verbal comments (about parts of the body, what type of sex the victim would "be good at," clothing, looks, etc.)
- Name calling (from "honey" to "bitch" and worse)
- Starting and repeating sexual rumors

- Leers and stares
- Sexual or “dirty” jokes
- Cartoons, pictures, and pornography
- Using the computer to leave sexual messages or graffiti, or to play sexually offensive computer games
- Gestures
- Pressure for sexual activity
- Cornering, blocking, standing too close, following
- Conversations that are too personal
- “Rating” an individual – for example, on a scale from 1 to 10
- Obscene t-shirts, hats, or pins
- Showing inappropriate videos and other materials during class
- Sexual assault and attempted sexual assault
- Massaging the neck, massaging the shoulders
- Touching oneself sexually in front of others
- Graffiti
- Making kissing sounds or smacking sounds, licking the lips suggestively
- Howling, catcalls, whistles
- Repeatedly asking someone out when he/she is not interested
- Pulling down someone’s pants or forcibly removing other articles of clothing
- Facial expressions (winking, kissing, etc.)
- “Slam books” (lists of students’ names with derogatory sexual comments written about them by other students)

Complaint Procedure:

If you feel that someone has sexually harassed or is sexually harassing you, you should file a complaint by following the steps outlined below:

1. Speak or send a note to any employee of the school district whom you trust, (i.e., nurse, psychologist/counselor, teacher, principal, assistant principal, superintendent, etc.). You can also speak to your parents who can then notify the superintendent, principal or assistant principal. Remember that the complaint procedure does not start until school/District personnel receive the complaint.
2. Within two school days of receipt of the verbal complaint, the employee will notify the principal/superintendent, and your parent/guardian will be notified of the pending complaint.
3. If you have not or do not want to put the complaint in writing, the employee will do so. This should be done no later than two (2) school days after you have talked, or given the note, to the employee. The complaint has to be put in writing to make sure that the employee fully and correctly understands the issue(s). A copy of the complaint, in writing, will be reviewed with you and your parent/guardian to ensure accuracy, before it is shared with the subject of the complaint.
4. The employee will refer the written complaint to the principal/superintendent. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may speak with you to get more information. In any case, the principal/superintendent or his/her designee will speak to the person who is alleged to have sexually harassed you (called the “respondent”) to obtain information as well.

- a. If the principal/superintendent feels that the complaint can be resolved without a formal investigation, he/she may use the informal procedure.¹ The informal procedure simply attempts to resolve the situation and can be done in many ways. Examples are:
- The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have a conversation between you and the respondent where you can tell the respondent that the behavior bothers you and must stop.
 - The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have you write a letter to the respondent saying that the behavior bothers you and must stop.
 - The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have separate conversations with you and the respondent

Examples of possible resolutions are as follows:

- Verbal statements of apology;
- Letters of apology;
- Assurances that the offensive behavior will end;
- Disciplinary action.

The informal procedure will be completed within five (5) school days from the date the principal/superintendent receives the complaint. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee will notify you, your parent/guardian, and the respondent of the results of the informal procedure. Resolution of the situation may or may not occur as a result of the informal procedure. If all the parties involved in this informal procedure feel that a resolution has been achieved, this discussion will remain confidential and no further action will be taken. If any of the parties feel that resolution has not been achieved, the following formal procedure will be used.

Investigative deadlines may be extended under extenuating circumstances such as illness.

Formal Procedure:

1. The formal procedure is used when any one of the following occurs:
 - a. You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent ask that the formal procedure be used;
 - b. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee decides that the formal procedure should be used; or
 - c. You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent feels that the informal procedure was not helpful or adequate and one of the parties request, within five (5) school days, that the formal procedure be used.
2. The formal procedure will be completed within twenty (20) school days of the complaint being filed with the principal/superintendent, or if the informal procedure was used, within twenty (20) school days of the request to start the formal procedure.
3. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee shall investigate the complaint and complete a written report, which will include:
 - All facts and circumstances of the incident;
 - A summary of the investigation, which will include interviews with anyone reasonably believed to have relevant information, namely, the individual filing the complaint, the

¹ Even if the principal/superintendent thinks that the informal procedure is acceptable, you or the respondent may ask that the formal procedure be used, rather than, or after, the informal procedure.

- respondent, and, if either party is under the age of 18, their parents (if appropriate), witnesses, and anyone else who may have experienced similar conduct;
- A description of any actions already taken and/or proposed by the principal/superintendent or his/her designee.

Copies of the written report, including the principal/superintendent's findings, and the rationale and documentation of it will be forwarded to each of the parties involved within five (5) school days of completion of the investigation. All documentation of sexual harassment will be kept on file at the office of the superintendent.

If the principal/superintendent or his/her designee finds that sexually harassing conduct has occurred, then he/she may discipline the respondent, require the respondent to apologize to the complainant, suggest that the respondent go to counseling, or require the respondent to attend training, refer the matter for review by state or local law enforcement authorities, or any combination of the above.

Either party may appeal the decision of the principal in writing to the superintendent, within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the findings of the formal procedure. The decision will be reviewed to ensure adequacy of the investigation and conclusions. Parties will be given an opportunity to submit additional information. The superintendent or his/her designee will make a decision and provide it in writing to both parties within thirty (30) days. The decision of the superintendent shall be final.

Other Resources:

Individuals also have the right to seek a remedy from the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 727-3990, and/or the Regional Office of Civil Rights for the United States Department of Education, 222 John W. McCormack Building, Boston, MA 02109, (617) 223-9662.

Retaliation:

No one may retaliate against you for filing a complaint. Further, no one may retaliate against any student, employee, or any other person because they provided information or helped in the investigation. If any person feels that he/she has been subjected to retaliation, he/she should file a complaint with the principal/superintendent.

Considerations To Remember:

- A. A man/boy, as well as a woman/girl, may be the victim of sexual harassment, and a woman/girl, as well as a man/boy, may be the harasser.
- B. The victim may be the same or opposite sex as the harasser.
- C. The victim does not have to be the person at whom the unwelcome sexual conduct is directed. The victim may also be someone who is affected by such conduct when it is directed toward another person. For example, inappropriate attempts at humor or the sexual harassment of one girl (or boy) may create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for another girl (or boy) or may unreasonably interfere with an individual's educational performance.

Reference to this policy shall be included in all student handbooks.

Policy 6435 WEAPONS

The Wachusett Regional School District shall prohibit possession and/or use of any kind of weapon; weapons will not be tolerated on school premises or at school-related or school-sponsored activities and events.

For the purpose of this policy, “weapon” includes, but is not limited to, firearms, knives, or any other devices, or objects used to inflict or to threaten bodily harm.

1. Any weapon found in a locker or other storage space which is assigned to a student and which has a lock or other security device may be considered to be the property of the student assigned to the locker or other storage space for the purpose of disciplinary action under the Student Discipline Code. Any student found to be in possession of a weapon on school premises or at a school-sponsored event may be subject to expulsion from school by the principal.
2. Violations of this policy may lead to expulsion under the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 Section 37H. Procedures for enforcement shall be contained in the Student Discipline Code.
3. In addition to the school discipline indicated in the Student Discipline Code, provided in paragraph B., appropriate criminal action shall be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 269, Section 10.
4. The weapons policy and regulations shall be implemented in accordance with the due process provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws and the Code of Massachusetts Regulations of the Department of Education, and the Student Discipline code.

Policy 6437 PROMOTING CIVIL RIGHTS AND PROHIBITING HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND HATE CRIMES

The Wachusett Regional School District is committed to providing our students equal educational opportunities and a safe learning environment free from harassment, discrimination and hate crimes. The District will not tolerate unlawful or disruptive behaviors at school or school-related activities including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities and parent involvement. The District will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of harassment, discrimination and hate crimes and will take prompt, effective action to end such behaviors including, when appropriate, referral to law enforcement agencies.

The Wachusett Regional School District prohibits all forms of harassment, discrimination and hate crimes related or unrelated to race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability. The District will not tolerate retaliation against those taking action consistent with this policy. Threats or acts of retaliation, regardless of how they are expressed, are serious offenses that will subject the violator to significant disciplinary or other corrective actions.

Harassment:

Harassment is oral, written, graphic, electronic, or physical conduct on school property or at school-related activities relating to an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the District's programs or activities by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational or work environment. For purposes of this policy, harassment shall also mean conduct that, if it persists, will likely create such a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational environment. A single incident may, depending upon its severity, create a hostile environment.

Student and Staff Responsibilities

All students and staff members, as members of the WRSD community, are responsible for complying with this policy and ensuring that he/she does not harass, discriminate or perpetuate a hate crime against another person on school grounds or at a school-related activity. Further, each student and staff member is responsible to make sure that he/she does not retaliate against any person who reports or files a complaint, or who helps someone report or file a complaint, or for cooperating in the investigation of a report of complaint.

Reporting Harassment, Discrimination or Hate Crimes

Students can report any case of harassment, discrimination or hate crimes to any adult in the school who is then responsible to inform the building principal or designee. The school principal or designee is responsible for receiving reports and complaints of violations at the school level. At the District level, the District Equity Coordinator is responsible for receiving and addressing reports or complaints of violations of this policy.

Any member of the school community who is informed of or believes that harassment, discrimination, retaliation or a hate crime has occurred or may have occurred at school or in a school-related activity must promptly report the incidents to the building principal or designee, or the Title VI Coordinator, Title IX Coordinator, Equity Coordinator or Superintendent. In situations where a student or other person is uncomfortable reporting the incident to a designated official, he/she may report it to a trusted school employee who must promptly inform a designated official.

Upon receipt of a written or oral report or complaint, the principal (or designee) and the Equity Coordinator will promptly notify each other of the facts alleged and any initial action taken. If and when a report or complaint involves physical injury, the principal or designee will promptly report the incident to the Superintendent. All complaints or reports must be documented on the District's "Reporting/Complaint Form". If the complainant or reporter is unwilling or unable to complete the form, the designated official who receives the oral complaint or report will promptly prepare the written report using the reporter's or complainant's own words. The designated official will also summarize any initial action taken. If the complaint occurs at the school level, the designated official will promptly provide the principal with the completed Reporting/Complaint Form with a copy to the District Equity Coordinator.

A report or complaint involving a principal should be filed with the District Equity Coordinator or Superintendent. A report or complaint involving the Equity Coordinator should be filed with the Superintendent. A report or complaint involving the Superintendent should be filed with the School Committee.

Reporting Other Incidences

Under General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51A for purposes of reporting child abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Under MGL119, Sec. 51A, a school staff member who has reasonable cause to believe that a student under the age of 18 is suffering physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect by a parent, guardian, school staff member or other caretaker must immediately report the abuse or neglect either directly to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or to the person designated by the school to accept those reports, who then promptly reports to DCF.

The principal and/or Superintendent will report to local police certain forms of sexual harassment and conduct that may constitute a crime.

The principal and/or Superintendent may report physical injury, destruction of public property, potential hate crimes and other acts of a serious criminal nature to local police for investigation.

Protection Against Retaliation

The District will take appropriate steps to protect from retaliation persons who take action consistent with this policy, or who report, file a complaint of, or cooperate in an investigation of a violation of this policy. Threats or acts of retaliation, whether person-to-person, by electronic means, or through third parties, are serious offenses that will subject the violator to significant disciplinary and other corrective action.

Ensuring Safety During Investigation

The designated official, in consultation with the District Equity Coordinator, will take any step he/she determines is necessary and/or advisable to protect, to the extent practicable, the complainant, witnesses, and other individuals from further incidents or from retaliation pending the outcome of the investigation.

Determination of Proceedings

Upon receipt of a complaint or report, the District must determine whether to undertake formal or informal proceedings to resolve the complaint or report. Upon receipt of a complaint or report, a designated official will attempt to identify and obtain cooperation from the victim(s). Where the designated official does not obtain the identity or cooperation of the alleged victim(s), the District will proceed with an investigation and then proceed to formal or informal proceedings to the extent possible.

Informal proceedings will commence when criteria for Formal Proceedings are not met. In these cases, a designated official, in consultation with the Equity Coordinator, may apply either the Student Code of Conduct or initiate an Informal Proceeding, which strives to resolve the report or complaint through non-disciplinary corrective action, although the designated official may also determine that disciplinary action is appropriate and necessary.

Formal proceedings will commence when the designated official, in consultation with the District Equity Coordinator determines that:

- the allegation is serious enough that it appears to place the complainant or any other person at physical risk;
- the incident has resulted in a criminal charge;

- the incident involves a referral to the Department of Children and Families (DCF);
- the allegation involves a serious form of harassment, discrimination or retaliation;
- there is a pending Formal Proceeding against the subject of the complaint;
- the subject of the complaint has previously been found to have violated this policy after Formal Proceedings, or
- that a formal proceeding is otherwise appropriate under the circumstances,

the designated official must then commence a Formal Proceeding.

Formal Proceedings-Investigation

The designated official will separately meet in a timely manner with the complainant and the subject of the complaint, and, if a student, with their parent(s) or guardian(s), to tell them about the formal process, explain the prohibition against retaliation, and determine the remedy the complainant seeks. The designated official will also explain that the investigation will be kept as confidential as possible, but that the District cannot promise absolute confidentiality, and may not be able to withhold the complainant's identity from the subject of the complaint, since such a promise could interfere with the District's ability to enforce its policy, conduct a fair and thorough investigation, or impose disciplinary or corrective action.

Following a prompt and thorough investigation, the designated official, in consultation with the District Equity Coordinator, will determine whether the allegations have been substantiated, and whether the policy, or, if the subject of the complaint is a student, the Student Code of Conduct has been violated. The designated official, in consultation with the District Equity Coordinator, will prepare a written report that includes the investigative findings, the investigative steps taken, and the reasons for those findings. These findings will specify whether the allegations have been substantiated, whether the policy, or if the subject of the complaint is a student, the Student Code of Conduct, has been violated, and any decision or recommendation for disciplinary and corrective action.

The designated official will promptly notify the complainant and the subject of the complaint in writing to let them know whether the complaint has been substantiated. If the complaint is substantiated, the designated official will also promptly notify the complainant of any non-disciplinary corrective action imposed to protect him/her from future policy violations. If the complaint is substantiated and the offender remains a student in the school, the designated official will meet with the offender and his/her parent or guardian, to describe the disciplinary and/or corrective action imposed, the school's expectations for future behavior and the potential consequences for retaliation or future violation of the policy. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the investigation or outcome thereof, the designated official shall inform the complainant of his/her right to file a complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and/or the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

If the District's investigation results from a third party report, the designated official will inform that person that the District has taken steps consistent with the policy, while not providing information about any disciplinary action imposed or any other information that would violate applicable state and federal confidentiality laws or student record regulations.

Violations

Where a violation of the policy has been reported by a third party, and an alleged victim fails to cooperate with the investigation, or denies the incident occurred, disciplinary and corrective action may be precluded or limited, depending upon circumstances and availability of information from other sources.

False Reports

Any person making false charges of harassment, discrimination or the occurrence of a hate crime is subject to disciplinary action.

Discipline

If a student has been found in violation of this policy, the District will impose disciplinary measures and/or corrective action to end and prevent further occurrences of the complained of action(s). The District will take into account harm suffered by the victim(s) as well as any damage to school or District property. The nature of any action taken must comply with District and school disciplinary policies. Any disciplinary or corrective action shall conform to the due process requirements of federal and state law.

Action concerning students may include a written warning; classroom or school transfer; suspension (short or long-term); exclusion from school-sponsored functions, after-school programs and/or extra-curricular activities; limited or denied access to parts or areas of the building; exclusion, expulsion or discharge from school; adult supervision on school premises; parent conferences; an apology to the victim; awareness training; empathy development awareness programs; counseling or any other action authorized by and consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and/or school disciplinary code. The District complies with federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to the discipline of students with disabilities.

Oversight

The District has designated the Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services as the District Equity Coordinator. The Equity Coordinator will, under the supervision of the Superintendent of Schools, ensure the successful administration of and compliance with this policy. Information including the name of the Equity Coordinator, his/her mailing address, telephone number and email address will be posted prominently in the District office as well as all school buildings within the District.

***Information from Attorney General Thomas Reilly's Safe Schools Initiative Sample Policy for Promoting Civil Rights and Prohibiting Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination and Hate Crimes, June 24, 2005, was used in drafting this document.*

The District has a policy (P6438 Anti-Bullying Policy) that meets the legal requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*

Policy 6438 – ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Wachusett Regional School District fosters and strives to maintain educational environments that are free from bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. No student or school staff member, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers,

athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals in the Wachusett Regional School District shall be permitted to bully a student through conduct or communication or to retaliate against any individual for reporting bullying or cooperating with an investigation of bullying. A student or school staff member, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors, to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals, who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation will be subject to a range of disciplinary sanctions including, but not limited to, reprimand, detention, suspension, expulsion, or other sanctions as determined by administration. In addition to being subject to school or employment related disciplinary sanctions, individuals who engage in bullying and/or retaliation shall be required to participate in instructional activities designed to develop the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying and/or retaliatory behavior(s).

The Wachusett Regional School District has established separate discrimination and harassment policies that provide protections to specific categories and groups of students and staff. Nothing in this policy shall prevent the Wachusett Regional School District from responding to discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state and/or federal law.

A. Definitions

Bullying: *The repeated use by one or more students or by a school staff member, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional, of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this policy, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.*

Cyber-bullying: *Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.*

Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying or cyber-bullying.

Aggressor/Perpetrator: A student or school staff member including but not limited to who engaged, either individually, or as part of a group, in bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

Hostile Environment: A situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the target's education.

Local law enforcement agency: Local police department(s).

Principal: The administrative leader of a school in the Wachusett Regional School District or his/her designee for the purposes of investigating and responding to reports of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

Retaliation: Intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, witnesses a bullying incident, or has reliable information about bullying.

Target/Victim: A student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

B. Policy Jurisdiction

For purposes of this policy, bullying is prohibited:

- 1) *on school grounds, on property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, at a function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district or a school; and*
- 2) *at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.*

C. Reporting Requirements

In furtherance of this policy and in accordance with M.G.L. c.71, §37O, a school staff member, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional, will immediately report to the school principal or their designee any instance of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation that the staff member has witnessed or has become aware of.

D. Investigation / Procedures

1. Investigative Procedures for Potential Bullying or Retaliation:

Each school is required to investigate in a timely manner and determine whether or not bullying and /or retaliation has occurred. This requires a determination as to the nature of the incident (bullying v. peer conflict). Once determined, outreach to the target and family shall occur concurrently with a commitment to addressing the needs of the target, identifying and educating bystanders, and providing consequences for aggressors.

Steps to be taken will include:

- a. Determine the nature, chronicity, and severity of the presenting situation.
- b. Identify aggressor(s), target(s), and bystanders
- c. Provide a safety and comfort plan for the target(s)
- d. Identify whether or not the bullying has occurred on or off campus
- e. Immediately remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action
- f. Have timely conversations with all individuals involved
- g. Establish a timetable for following up with parents, especially parents of target(s)
- h. Inform parents, guardians and all relevant adults of initial investigation following confidentiality requirements
- i. Collect and document data

E. Consequences from Findings:

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior M.G.L. c. 71 § 370(d)(v). Skill building approaches include offering individualized skill-building sessions based on our district's anti-bullying curricula, providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with our counselors and psychologists, implementing a range of academic and non-academic positive behavioral support to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals, meeting with parents and guardians to engage parent support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home, adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills, and making a referral for evaluation. If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance the plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct.

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504, which should be read in cooperation with the state laws regarding student discipline, govern discipline procedures for eligible students with disabilities protected by these laws.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, the student shall be subject to disciplinary action. Consequences for bullying or retaliation should be immediately and consistently applied and must be delivered in a non-hostile manner. Consequences may be disagreeable or uncomfortable but should not involve revenge or hostile punishment.

Consequences should consider these specific issues:

- a. Nature, severity, and chronicity of the behavioral impact on the target
- b. Degree of physical, psychological, social harm on the target
- c. Student's age, development and degree of maturity
- d. Surrounding circumstances and context in which the incident(s) occurred
- e. Prior disciplinary history and continuing patterns of behavior
- f. Relationship between and among the parties involved
- g. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred
- h. The need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.

The appropriate range of consequences, subject to due process where appropriate, may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Report to law enforcement
- b. Expulsion
- c. Referral to outside agency
- d. Reassignment of classes
- e. Reassignment of seats in lunch, bus, class, etc.
- f. Out-of-school suspension
- g. In-school suspension
- h. Detention
- i. Loss of privileges (including before and after school activities)
- j. Temporary removal from the classroom
- k. Verbal reprimand

In addition, instructional activities designed to develop the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying and/or retaliatory behaviors will be given, which may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Reparation to the target
- b. Completion of curricular based assignment(s)
- c. Meeting with Civil Rights Coordinator
- d. Completion of community service designed to help the aggressor understand and respect differences; written report required by the aggressor
- e. Therapeutic support for both aggressor and targets

F. Notification Obligations:

Notice to another school or district: If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, commonwealth charter school, or non-public school, a school administrator

shall promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school or district so that both may take appropriate action.

Notice to parents or guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the student aggressor of this, and the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations of 603 CMR 49.00, including 49.05 paragraph 4:

“A principal's notification to a parent about an incident or a report of bullying or retaliation must comply with confidentiality requirements of the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00, and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations, 34 CFR Part 99, as set forth in 603 CMR 49.07.”

The principal or designees will notify the parents/guardians of the acts the district has taken to prevent further acts of bullying and retaliation through consequences and instructional activities, as discussed above. Moreover, the school will notify the parents/guardians about the range of services, including, but not limited to, counseling both individually and in group settings, that are specifically designed to address issues of bullying and retaliation.

Notice to law enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirement of 603 CMR 49.00.

G. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The superintendent will be responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in district schools.

(i) Development of the Plan

The plan shall be developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. The consultation shall include notice and a public comment period.

The plan shall recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have any one (1) of the above characteristics.

The plan shall be reviewed and updated biennially.

School-wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Program

All Wachusett Regional schools will include a District-wide bullying prevention and intervention plan that is proactive and educational, in keeping with the guidelines published by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The district is committed to supporting each school in their adoption of a district-wide bullying prevention and intervention program.

(ii) Contents of the Plan

The District-wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall include:

- (a) descriptions of and statements prohibiting bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation;
- (b) procedures for students, staff, parents, guardians, and others to report bullying or retaliation;
- (c) a provision that reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously but that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- (d) a provision that any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action;
- (e) procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation;
- (f) procedures for collecting, maintaining and reporting bullying incident data;
- (g) the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a perpetrator for bullying or retaliation; provided, however, that the disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
- (h) clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that victim's needs for protection
- (i) strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors, targets and appropriate family members;
- (j) procedures consistent with state and federal law for promptly notifying the parents or guardians of a victim and a perpetrator; provided, that the parents or guardians of a victim shall also be notified of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation
- (k) provision for the notification of local law enforcement agencies if the principal reasonably believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor;
- (l) provision for annual and ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development training shall be in accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c.71, §37O;
- (m) provision for the implementation of a research-based anti-bullying curriculum in grades PK-12 and for informing parents regarding the curriculum contents, the dynamics of bullying, and online safety and cyber-bullying and strategies for reinforcing the curriculum at home; and
- (n) the specific steps that the District shall take to support vulnerable students and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies needed to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment.

(iii) Implementation of the Plan

The school principal shall be responsible for implementing and oversight of the District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan within his/her school.

(iv) Public Notice

The Wachusett Regional School District shall provide to all school staff annual written notice of the plan. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the plan applicable to the school. Relevant sections of the plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in a school district or school employee handbook. The plan shall be posted on the website of each school in the District.

Legal Refs: M.G.L. c.71, §370; 603 CMR 49.00

Policy 6515 STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

The Wachusett Regional School Committee recognizes and supports student publications and other literary activities that give students an experience in journalism.

The School Committee recognizes that the District must maintain a level of objectivity deemed to be in the best interest of the community and, to this end, the following procedures are in effect:

1. No school publication will accept advertising that is political, religious, or discriminatory in nature.
2. All advertising is subject to review and approval by the principal or a designee relative to content and appropriateness.
3. Final editorial control and approval of all materials intended for publication are the responsibility of, and may be subject to the approval of, the school administration.
4. This policy shall be referenced in the “Student Handbook”.
5. A statement indicating the editorial control by the school administration regarding all advertising will be included on order forms or other similar correspondence.

Policy 6531.1 SOCIAL MEDIA

Section I: Introduction

The Wachusett Regional School District recognizes that our students must learn to utilize modern online tools for social and educational collaboration. These tools, include, but are not limited to:

- Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Email, chat, and other messaging technologies
- Message boards and forums
- Blogs and collaborative websites

Section II: Goals of the Policy

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee permits the use of social media platforms that support instructional opportunities and the social/emotional development of students. The District

promotes educational uses of technology, including social media tools, along with appropriate training for students and staff on safety, proper use, and management of innovative learning tools.

Social media platforms will be used in District schools to achieve the following goals:

- Educate students, staff, and parents/guardians about the concerns and benefits of social media
- Access social media during and beyond the school day for educational purposes, social/emotional development, and other acceptable school-related uses
- Explore ways to integrate social media with classroom teaching and learning
- Integrate student publication with authentic social media environments
- Encourage the use of technology-based interventions to support student learning
- Allow for ongoing interaction between students and teachers for appropriate school-related use
- Promote student interaction with peers, outside organizations, and professionals in a global community
- Offer and encourage student use of online resources to communicate and seek support for bullying and safety concerns
- Encourage parent/guardian interaction with teachers and schools through the use of digital communications and social media environments

Section III: Guidelines for Use of Social Media Platforms

Any use of social media platforms, whether in District schools or related to District programming, will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All use of social media tools must comply with District acceptable use policies, inclusive of but not limited to Policy 6532 Videotaping and Photographing of District Students and Policy 6531.2 BYOD (Bring Your Own Device).
- All staff and student online communication is subject to state and federal laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and District policies governing communication
- All staff and student online communication is subject to policies ensuring safe environments for students and staff free from bullying, harassment, and other forms of unwanted communication that threaten well-being and productivity
- Staff and District administration are encouraged to collaborate in developing social media tools
- Staff social media accounts used to communicate with current WRSD students will be established using District email accounts and will remain separate from any personal staff social media accounts
- Educational social media accounts maintained by staff members shall not contain personal information
- District staff shall not subscribe to students' personal postings in social media platforms not controlled or monitored by District staff

Policy 6531.2 BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)

The Wachusett Regional School District is committed to providing opportunities for students to utilize technology in order to:

- Gather and evaluate internet resources

- Create and share digital content
- Develop digital literacy
- Participate in a productive and respectful online environment

As part of this commitment, school administrators and teachers may allow students to use personally-owned devices and access school wireless networks to enhance instruction and learning. Permission to use such devices will be granted only when sufficient network resources are present. School administrators and teachers shall determine the extent to which the use of personal devices is permitted. However, such personal devices shall not be required by the District. Should students not have access to personal devices, or should they chose not to bring in their own devices, access will be made available by the District to complete assignments.

Access to District networks is a privilege which may be revoked at any time. Students must have explicit permission to use personal devices each time they are used. Students should assume that personal devices may not be used unless told otherwise. When explicit approval has NOT been granted, all devices must be turned off and put away. Recording audio, video or photographic images without the subjects' permission is not allowed in school at any time. (reference Policy 6532 *Videotaping and Photographing of District Students*). The use of personal devices in school is subject to the District's acceptable use policy regarding computers. This policy is outlined in each school's student handbook. In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the District will filter all internet content available to students. Any attempt to access inappropriate material will result in disciplinary action.

Student Responsibilities

- Device Security - As with any personal property, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that any personally-owned device is safe and secure. The District is not liable or responsible for damage, theft, or loss of any student-owned device or any information stored on a student-owned device.
- Network Security – Student devices shall have up-to-date antivirus protection. Computers or other devices infected with malicious software or lacking proper virus protection will not be allowed on school networks.
- Technical Support - The District does not have the resources to provide technical support for privately owned devices. Accordingly, District technology personnel will NOT attempt to troubleshoot or repair student-owned computers or other devices.
- Cellular Data Charges - Cellular devices may incur usage fees from cellular providers for texting or when accessing the internet without being properly connected to the school's internal wireless network. The District is not responsible for any charges related to texting or internet usage on student-owned devices.

Legal Refs: Title XVII – Children's Internet Protection Act

Policy 6562 ALTERNATE STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

It shall be expected that bus students will go to and from school by the same means on a daily basis. A parent or high school student may choose an alternate mode of transportation over which the school

system has no authority. Therefore, a choice to use an alternative form of transportation other than the school bus shall be at the risk of the parent and the student.

Procedures for requesting alternate transportation to and from school shall be contained in the student handbook. The high school student will be responsible to inform parent/guardian on taking a late bus or alternate means of transportation

K-8 students will be required to present written permission notice to the school from parent/guardian when using alternate means of transportation.

In case of emergencies, oral notification will be an acceptable alternative with the administration making a written record of the notification.

All high school students applying for a parking sticker and using a personal vehicle to transport other students will be required to carry personal liability insurance on the vehicle in the amount of \$100,000 - \$300,000.

Policy 6611 STUDENT IMMUNIZATIONS

The Wachusett Regional School District is required, pursuant to MGL c.76 section 15 and its associated regulations, 105 CMR 220.000, to keep an immunization record on file for each student enrolled in the school or system. The record must contain, at a minimum, the month and year of each immunization, and be signed by the healthcare provider. Immunization histories must be up to date for each child according to Immunization Guidelines published by the Commonwealth.

The Massachusetts School Immunization Law, M.G.L. c. 76 Section 15 provides that: *“no child shall, except as hereinafter provided, be admitted to school except upon presentation of a physician’s certificate that the child has been successfully immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, and poliomyelitis and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health.”*

Pursuant to the Massachusetts School Immunization Law quoted immediately above:

No unimmunized student shall be admitted to, or be allowed to remain in school, unless they can satisfy these requirements:

- A. A medical exemption is allowed if a healthcare provider submits documentation to school that an immunization is medically contraindicated; or
- B. A religious exception is allowed if a parent submits a signed statement to the school stating immunizations are contrary to his/her sincere religious beliefs.
- C. Students who fall under McKenney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001.

Do note: Unimmunized students (including those with medical, religious exemptions, and those who fall under McKenney-Vento) who are otherwise exempt from the immunization law may be subject to exclusion from school if there is exposure to certain communicable childhood diseases, as specified in 105 CMR 300.200.

Do note: Philosophical exemptions are not allowed in Massachusetts *even if* signed by a physician. The documentation regarding the above qualified exemptions will be kept in the students' files at school.

Policy 6613.2 ATHLETIC HEAD INJURY AND CONCUSSION POLICY

The safety of students is a high priority for the Wachusett Regional School District. Students who sustain head injuries while in extracurricular athletic activities and those involved in their treatment must follow the protocol based on 105 C.M.R 201.000

(<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/injury/105-cmr-201.pdf>) found online on the high school and middle schools' websites as well as in the student handbooks.

Students who have sustained a head injury must be appropriately evaluated according to the protocol. In order to resume athletic activity, a medical clearance and authorization form must be submitted indicating that the student has recovered. Return to academics will be consistent with the protocol.

District administration, athletic staff, and nursing staff will review the protocol annually to ensure that it is current and reflects best practice. The School Committee will review and revise this policy as needed, but at least bi-annually.

Policy 6616 INSURANCE

The Wachusett Regional School District shall require each student participating in intramural programs and/or athletic teams to provide evidence of an active accident or health insurance policy covering the student.

Policy 6619 LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES

The Wachusett Regional School District is committed to providing a safe and healthy school environment for all students that is inclusive of school-wide practices that will minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to students while participating in all elements of the school day. School-wide practices along with identified accommodations, as deemed necessary by school personnel, parents/guardians and/or the student's physician, will provide all students the opportunity to participate fully in all school programs and activities. The successful management of this policy will require a partnership among the parents/guardians, the student, and all school personnel involved with the education, extra-curricular activities and the transportation of the student.

When it is determined by a physician that a student from the Wachusett Regional School District has a life threatening allergy and must have an Epinephrine Auto Injector, a 504 meeting will be convened to determine eligibility and the student's ability to successfully access all facets of the curriculum including extra-curricular activities. In the event that eligibility is determined, the 504 Plan will be communicated to professional staff of the building and all other school personnel who will have responsibility for the student throughout the course of the school day including but not limited to: teachers, bus drivers, playground monitors, cafeteria workers, substitute teachers and/or substitute nurse, and before and after school program monitors. In keeping with the 504 guidelines, this plan will be reviewed and revised annually.

At the start of every school year, the District health offices will provide allergy awareness training to staff in each building. All staff will learn how to minimize exposure to food and environmental allergens and to recognize the symptoms of anaphylaxis, the life threatening reaction that may occur with allergen exposure. Whenever it is possible to do so safely, the administration of the Epinephrine Auto Injector will be done by the certified school nursing staff or health care staff. Because a certified nurse or health care person may not be available to respond, staff will be trained on the administration of an Epinephrine Auto Injector. Whenever a new teacher or staff member is hired, the school nurse at his or her assigned school will provide that individual with Epinephrine training within five (5) days of beginning work. All staff and teachers must timely complete the Epinephrine administration training. The Superintendent will ensure that the District physician provides each school health office with the medical orders necessary to maintain a supply of all medications, including epinephrine as well as the ability to administer the epinephrine as necessary.

At the start of each school year, the health office will provide a list of all students who have life-threatening allergies to building administration, the main office secretary, the teachers, coaches, cafeteria staff, playground monitors, before and after school monitors, and the bus company. In an ongoing basis, the health office will maintain, update, and distribute a revised list of students with life threatening allergies. All coaches and paid co-curricular personnel must provide evidence that they have received their yearly training to administer an Epinephrine Auto Injector immediately upon the start of their employment or when requested by the District. If such personnel have not been trained to administer an Epinephrine Auto Injector, they must immediately request training through the District health offices. Volunteers leading co-curricular activities are encouraged to receive training.

In response to the presence of food-based allergies, parents/guardians may not send outside food/candy/drink to share in the classroom. As part of a District-wide initiative to discourage the use of food as a reward, both teachers and parents/guardians are encouraged to recognize and celebrate students by methods that do not involve food. For this same reason, any projects or classroom activities should also avoid the use of food items. Traditional school-based celebrations (i.e. the 8th grade cookout, etc) may be permitted with the permission of the Superintendent's office. Precautions will be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

The District's Policy for Bullying Prevention and Intervention, as well as all Student Handbook policies pertaining to the support of a safe and healthy school environment, should make reference to the safety and well being of those students with food and life threatening allergies.

Policy 6621 TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND SECURITY PROCEDURES

The Wachusett Regional School District and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing District requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the principal.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders or damages properties will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges. Notification of this policy shall be contained in the Student Handbook.

1. Children will be instructed as to the proper procedure for boarding and exiting from a school bus and in proper and safe conduct while aboard.
2. Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted at least twice a year to acquaint student riders with procedures in emergency situations.
3. All vehicles used to transport children will be inspected periodically for conformance with state and federal safety requirements.
4. Classroom instruction on school bus safety will be provided.

Policy 6631 NON-DISCRIMINATION

The WRSDC policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. If someone has a complaint or feels that they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, their complaint should be registered with a compliance officer.

The compliance officer's name and contact information may be obtained through the Superintendent's office or the District website.

Policy 6910 STUDENT RECORDS

The Wachusett Regional School District shall:

1. Take all reasonable precautions to preserve the confidentiality of a student's records.
2. Make available for inspection all school records of a student upon request of the parent or legal guardian.
3. Make available for inspection all school records of a student upon his or her request provided that the student is fourteen (14) years of age or older or upon entering the ninth grade.
4. Disseminate, to parents and students, State Regulations on Student Records and this policy annually.

Regulations:

The State Board of Education has adopted regulations pertaining to student records that are designed to ensure parents' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records, and to assist school authorities in their responsibilities for the maintenance of student records.

The regulations apply to all information kept by the District on a student in a manner such that he or she may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record into the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript includes only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. This information includes name, address, course titles, grades, credits, and grade

level completed. The transcript is kept by the school system for at least sixty years after the student leaves the system.

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school system about the student. This may include such things as standardized test results, class rank, school sponsored extra-curricular activities, and evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons. The temporary record is destroyed seven years after the student leaves the school system.

The following is a summary of major parent and student rights regarding their student records:

Inspection of Record - A parent, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least fourteen (14) years old, has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent or student within ten (10) days of the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. In the event the parent/student requests copies of a student record, the District may charge the parents/student for said copies at the District rate.

Confidentiality of Records - No individuals or organizations are allowed to have access to information in the student record without specific, informed, written consent of the parent, legal guardian, or student of legal age. Exceptions include only those state agencies that specifically are authorized to request student information.

According to federal law, the District is required to release the names, addresses, and telephone listings of students to military recruiters and institutions of higher learning upon request for recruitment and scholarship purposes without prior consent. Parents and eligible students have the right to request that this information not be released without their consent by notifying their school building office in writing. At the beginning of each school year, parents of incoming freshmen and parents of students new to Wachusett Regional High School will be mailed a form to complete, indicating their choice to give or withhold their consent to release information.

The District Administration shall not release a student's social security number or date and place of birth to anyone except as required by law.

Amendment of Record - The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have the right to request that information of the record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have a right to a conference with the school principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system.

Destruction of Records - The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed a certain period of time after the student leaves the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. Before any such information

may be destroyed, the parent and student must be notified, and have an opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before its destruction.

Consistent with the Education Reform Act, the District will transfer a student's record to a new school outside the Wachusett Regional School District without prior consent required from the parent or eligible student.