

# Dawson Elementary School 2024-2025 Student Handbook

**“Developing our students’ knowledge, skills and talents to the fullest so they can make the world a better place for all.”**



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Wachusett Regional School District

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Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to Dawson Elementary School and the Wachusett Regional School District. Please keep this handbook as a reference guide to your school's programs and policies. The handbook is reviewed annually and is intended to assist you in adjusting to your surroundings and to familiarize you with the many services your school has to offer.

As we move into a new school year, I look forward to working with the students, families, staff, and other members of the Dawson community to continue to support the District's commitment to educational excellence for its young people.

Sincerely,  
Joy Wilde, Principal

Wachusett Regional School District Committee policies supersede the material contained in this handbook. A copy of the district policies is available at the Dawson Library, the WRSD central office and online at <http://www.wrsd.net>. WRSD policies are formatted the same as this paragraph when referenced in part or in whole.

**The student code of conduct, grievance procedures, sexual harassment policies, special education discipline policies, restraint policies and any other section of the student handbook will be translated into the primary language of a parent/guardian upon request.**

**The Wachusett Regional School District does not tolerate discrimination or harassment of students, parents, employees, or the general public on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status, disability, homelessness, religion, age, or immigration status. Consistent with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act, the District also does not discriminate against students on the basis of homelessness.**

**The School District, in complying with the laws of the Federal Government and Massachusetts, notifies you of this action and informs you that the coordinator for compliance at the building level is the school principal.**

**At the District level, the ADA (disability pertaining to non-students), Title VI and Title IX (race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, and sexual orientation Coordinator is Pamela Rutkowski, Director of Human Resources, WRSD, 1745 Main St., Jefferson, MA 01522, 508-829-1670 ext. 224**

**At the District level, the ADA and Section 504 (disability pertaining to students) Coordinator is Maria Letasz, Director of SEL & Equity, WRSD, 1745 Main St., Jefferson, MA 01522, 608-829-1670 ext. 237**

**Notice of Procedural Safeguards (formerly titled “Parent’s Rights Brochure”) can be accessed at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/>.**

**Staff and School Directory**

<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>Instructional Aides</b>
Mrs. Bercume	Mrs. Leung
Mrs. Mercer	Mrs. Gonzalez
Mrs. O'Malley	Mr. Larson
Mrs. Flynn	Mrs. McCourt
	Mrs. Longvall
	Mrs. Spakauskas & Crossing Guard
<b>Grade 1</b>	Mrs. Loftus
Mrs. Bembenek	Mrs. Harding
Mrs. Fullam	Mrs. Simmons
Mrs. King	Mrs. Duval
Mrs. Gilreath	Mrs. Mahoney- Kindergarten Aide
	Mrs. Donovan-Kindergarten Aide
	Mrs. Lovejoy
<b>Grade 2</b>	Mrs. Smollin- Kindergarten Aide
Mrs. Murphy	Ms. Stevens
Mrs. Duquette	Mrs. Vidito
Mrs. Trant	Trisha Burque– Playground Monitor
Mrs. Gentilucci	Janet Bourget-Lunch Monitor
Ms. Petruzzi	
<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Administrative Assistant</b>
Mrs. Crowley	Mrs. Verrier
Mrs. Marzo	
Mrs. Gauthier	
Mrs. Koziol	<b>ELL Specialist Teacher</b>
Mrs. McMullen	Mrs. Prendergast
<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Teaching and Learning Center ( TLC)</b>
Mrs. Petry	Ms. Zahigian
Mrs. Consiglio	
Mrs. Johnson	

Ms. Coghlin	
<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>School Cafeteria Services</b>
Mr. Ross	Ms. Hudson -Head Food Services Assoc.
Ms. Warner	Mrs. O'Coin - Food Service Assoc.
Ms. McKillop	Mrs. Hastings - Food Service Assoc.
Mrs. Mall	
	<b>Custodial Services</b>
<b>Art Education</b>	Mr. Crandall - Head Custodian
Mrs. Hickey	Mr. Guerin - Custodian
	Mr. Miller - Custodian
<b>Music Education</b>	Mr. O'Coin - Custodian
Mrs. Stringer-Grimsley	
	<b>Health Services</b>
<b>Physical Education</b>	Mrs. Duong
Mr. Conrad	
	<b>Dawson School Administration</b>
<b>Language Specialist</b>	Joy Wilde, Principal
Mrs. LePage-Speech	Joseph Yaskis, Assistant Principal
Mrs.. Erickson - Speech Assistant	
	<b>Wachusett Regional School District Administration</b>
<b>School Psychologist</b>	
Mrs. Michele Licio	Dr. James Reilly, Superintendent
	Dr. Jon Krol, Deputy Superintendent
<b>School Counselor</b>	William Beando, Director of Human Resources
	Joan DeAngelis, Director of Special Education and Pupil Services
Dr. Anderson	Lara DeRose, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
<b>Special Education</b>	Maria Letasz, Director of Student Services
Mr. Hackett	
Mrs. Simone	
Mrs. Lauring	
Mrs. Olson	
Ms. Loverin-Physical Therapist	
Mrs. Githmark Occupational Therapist	



## **School Hours**

School office hours are 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

### Grades K-5

8:50 - 9:00 Arrival. Students who arrive after 9:00 will be marked tardy and must receive a late pass from the office.

3:30 Student Dismissal

**Supervision of students by staff does not begin until 8:50. Therefore students must not be dropped off at school prior to that time unless they are attending the Before School Program.**

## **1. Wachusett Regional School District Committee**

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee, elected by the citizens of Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland and Sterling, is directly responsible to the Massachusetts Department of Education for the operation of the District's Schools in accordance with State Laws and Department Regulations, and to the citizens of the District for the quality of the educational program and responsible stewardship of the District's financial resources.

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee is the policy-making body and has the final authority in all matters relating to the schools. The School Committee determines policy and enacts business only when meeting as a committee in a legally called meeting.

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee recognizes that every child is entitled by law to a free public education designed to meet his or her needs and potential. The Committee recognizes its responsibility to provide an educational environment that will:

- Encourage equal opportunity for intellectual and creative growth for all children.
- Encourage opportunities for physical and emotional growth for all children.
- Encourage opportunities for independent and responsible thought and action on the part of all students.

## **2. Non-Discrimination 6631**

The Wachusett Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, English Language Learner (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, English Language Learner (ELL) status, housing status or other protected category.

## **3. Mission Statement**

The Mission of Dawson Elementary School is to provide a caring, safe school environment in which all students are valued, differences are respected, and each student is supported in a way that allows their full academic potential to be reached. Within this environment, students will develop socially and emotionally through the study of our core values of respect, responsibility, honesty, kindness, and integrity. Dawson students will be provided the opportunity to think critically and creatively about their world, collaborate with peers, and develop a love of learning. Our strong foundation of academic and social emotional education will foster an inclusive environment where all students are dynamic, contributing members of the Dawson community and beyond.

## **4. Annual School Events**

Dawson School has several traditional activities that happen each year and some events that are new each year. These will be communicated via SMORE communication.

## **5. Organizations**

### **5.1. School Improvement and Modernization Council (SIMCO)**

The SIMCO is an organization providing an opportunity for teachers, parents, students, and members of the community to become informed and actively participate in the educational process at Dawson School. Included in this group are parent, teacher and community representatives. The council meets monthly to advise and assist the principal in:

- setting goals for the school;
- identifying students' educational needs;
- reviewing the school building budget;
- preparing the school improvement plan.

All meetings are open to the public and parental attendance is encouraged. Notices regarding times and locations of meetings are typically sent home on Communication Day through e-mail.

### **5.2. Parent-Teacher Association (P.T.A.)**

The P.T.A. is a service organization whose main function is providing educational materials and social and cultural events, which will be of mutual benefit for parents, teachers and children. It promotes a closer working relationship between home and school by encouraging volunteers to participate at school and P.T.A. events.

One of its functions has been to raise funds for enrichment programs, field trips, equipment and family programs and events. Officers are elected annually and consist of president (or co-presidents), vice president (or co-vice presidents), secretary and treasurer. Members volunteer to coordinate or assist at events during meetings or through sign-up sheets.

Anyone who is interested in the Dawson School is cordially invited to join the P.T.A. meetings, which are held monthly. Notices regarding times and locations of meetings are typically sent home via email the week prior to each meeting. More information can also be found on the PTA website:

<http://www.dawsonpta.com/>

## **6. Health Services**

Students who become ill or injured will be directed to the school nurse for assessment, evaluation, treatment and/or referral. If the nurse is not available, students are to report to the office. Students are not to leave the building without authorization. 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.**

### **6.1. Confidentiality (WRSDC P6650)**

The Wachusett Regional School District shall encourage communication between and among school personnel, students, and parents. The Committee recognizes that circumstances may arise when a student with a personal or medical problem may seek help from a member of the faculty or administration. In such instances, the Committee will respect the confidentiality of communications between student and a teacher,

counselor, nurse, or administrator. However, it is not the intention of this statement of policy to encourage interference with parental or legal authority.

## **6.2. School Immunization Law**

In accordance with Chapter 76, Section 15 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, parents/guardians of students must provide documentation of immunizations or have on file a religious or medical exemption.

### **6.2. Immunizations**

All students must be compliant with immunizations required by Massachusetts regulations (102 CMR 7.09 and 105 CMR 220.00) and established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The only exemptions are for documented religious or medical reasons.

### **6.3. Physical Examinations**

Massachusetts requires that a physical examination by a healthcare provider be on file with the nurse for Kindergarten entry and every four years thereafter (grades 4 and 8). Students entering the District without records or recent physicals must have a physical examination within the first year. A physical exam is also required prior to tryouts for competitive athletics or cheerleading.

## **6.4. Mandated Screening Programs**

Students in grades K through 5 are tested for various parameters annually according to the chart below. The school nurse does postural screening for scoliosis with assistance from the Physical Education Staff. Parents will be notified if screening procedures identify possible problems.

Grade	Weight	Height	Vision	Hearing	Scoliosis
Kindergarten	X	X	X	X	
1	X	X	X	X	
2			X	X	
3			X	X	
4	X	X	X	X	
5			X	X	X

## **6.5. Contagious Conditions**

Parents are requested to report any incidence of contagious disease or condition to the school nurse. This includes incidence of head lice and scabies. When these conditions are identified, the student will be sent home. Return to school is permitted following treatment and verification by the school nurse that the student is free of disease, lice, nits or mites.

It is suggested that if your child is placed on antibiotics, they remain at home for the first 24 hours and/or follow physician's orders. Children having a fever should remain at home until their temperature is within normal range for 24 hours.

District policies regarding other health conditions can be found on the District website.

## **6.6. Temporary or Permanent Exclusion from School Activities/ Physical Education**

Students are expected to participate in all activities of the school program including recess and physical education. If, for health reasons, a child must be excluded for a temporary time from any activity, written verification from parents is required. For a long-term exclusion, a physician's note is required.

## **6.7. Administration of Medication**

The policy for the administration of medication in school is designed to protect the health of the child and the rights of the staff. The following policy and procedure will be followed for administering any medication during school hours. This includes both prescription and over-the-counter drugs. If the medication to be administered falls under the classification of "psychotropic drugs", Guidelines of Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71 Section 54B, will be followed.

For ALL medications (prescription and non-prescription), medication shall be administered by the school nurse provided that:

- 1.1. The school nurse must have on file the "**Physician Medication Order/Parent Consent Form**" properly completed by the physician. This form states the type of medication and the frequency with which to give it. This form must also be signed by the parent/guardian. Parental permission alone is not acceptable.
- 1.2. The "**Physician Medication Order/Parent Consent Form**" must be updated by the physician and parent whenever the medication is changed.
- 1.3. All medication should be properly safeguarded in the nurse's office.
2. Procedure
  - 2.1. The nurse shall have the right, with just and reasonable cause, to refuse the administration of medication.
  - 2.2. No child is to transport medication to or from school. All medication must be brought to and from school via the parent or other responsible adult. However, in the case of self-medicating students, students may transport and self-administer upon completion of a written agreement between the parent and the nurse.
  - 2.3. All medication must be submitted in the original pharmacy container with the label intact.
  - 2.4. Cough drops and lozenges are prohibited in Elementary and Middle Schools by WRSD Policy.
3. Medical Emergencies
  - 3.1. In the event of a life-threatening or serious injury or illness, an attempt will be made to contact the parent or guardian. Emergency Medical Services will be contacted for their assistance, and the student will be transported to the appropriate medical facility for treatment.

## **6.8. Accident Insurance**

The Wachusett Regional School District sponsors a student-participation insurance plan. Brochures describing the plans available are available to all students during the first week of school.

(WRSDC P6616) The Wachusett Regional School District shall require each student participating in intramural programs to provide evidence of an active accident or health insurance policy covering the student.

## 6.9. Eye Protection (WRSDC P6613.1)

The Wachusett Regional School District shall require that students, teachers, staff members, and visitors wear protective devices in accordance with Section 55C, Chapter 71 of the General Laws.

## 7. No-School Announcements

A School Messenger call will be made to all parents to notify them of a school cancellation. In addition to the school-messenger call, no-school announcements will be aired on the following radio/television stations beginning at approximately 6:15 A.M.:

WTAG 580 AM	WFTW 1440 AM	Channel 4
WNEB 1230 AM	WSRS 96.1 FM	Channel 5
WEIM 1280 AM	WAAF 107.3 FM	Channel 7
WORC 1310 AM		

During the winter months, bad weather occasionally makes it necessary to delay the opening of school. Delayed openings will be announced on the radio, television stations, and through School Messenger.

If the announcement is for a **delayed opening**, students or their parents should continue listening to these radio stations for further announcements, in case we change to **no school** all day. Delays could be up to two hours. Delayed openings do not affect dismissal times.

In an emergency such as a loss of water, boiler breakdown, or extreme weather conditions school may be dismissed earlier than the regular closing time. Additionally, the Recreation After-School Program is sometimes canceled due to weather conditions. **Parents should be certain that all Unanticipated Early Dismissal/Cancellation of After School Program Forms are kept up to date, and should inform their children as to what they should do in case of early dismissal.** These forms are distributed for completion at the beginning of the school year; if changes need to be made during the school year, parents should contact the school secretary.

Afternoon kindergarten classes are sometimes canceled due to storms. Should this be necessary you will be contacted through School Messenger. Information will also be announced on the radio and TV. Occasionally, the high school and some middle schools are dismissed early to assure that the buses arrive on time for dismissal at Dawson to take place at the usual time.

Because of requests from the radio stations, we strongly emphasize that no one calls the stations or town officials for school cancellations. There will be announcements aired at the times mentioned above if school is canceled, delayed in opening, or dismissed early.

## 8. Attendance

Education requires good attendance in order to reap its fullest reward. **It is imperative that your child has good school attendance.** Any day missed splinters the educational sequence, which affects school attitudes and overall progress. However, children who are sick and cannot function well should be kept at home.

**If your child is going to be out of school for the day, please call school first thing in the morning. This is informational as well as a safety check. A message can be left at (508) 829-6828.**

### **8.1.1. Absence, Tardiness, Early Dismissal**

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

### **8.1.2. Late Arrival Policy**

If a pupil arrives at school after 9:00 A.M., they must be accompanied by a parent/guardian to the Office where a tardy slip (which is to be presented to the teacher by the pupil) is issued. It is important to have your child arrive for school on time. **Please do your best to have your child arrive on time for school.** When a child is late it causes a disruption in their classroom routine and he/she may miss specific instruction on morning work.

### **8.1.3. Early Dismissal Policy**

Early dismissal (before 3:30 P.M.) of pupils can be arranged through the office. Please see that your child brings a note stating the reason for dismissal and the time he/she is to be dismissed. The child should then be picked up at the office at the early dismissal time.

### **8.1.4. Dismissal Time Parent Pick-Up**

If a parent wishes to pick up a child at the regular dismissal time, please send a note with the child in the morning. In order to facilitate end of the day dismissal for the entire school, students who are parent pick-ups will be dismissed from the rear door and not from the main office. Parents are to use the Bailey Rd. access at the rear of the building to pick up their child at dismissal time. If you arrive early and are waiting for your child to be dismissed please do not leave your car idling as the exhaust from the cars is drawn into the building.

### **8.1.5. Before School Drop off**

- Students should not be dropped off prior to 8:50 A.M.
- Vehicles should enter school property via the access from Bailey Road to the rear of the building and proceed to the entrance at the glass corridor leading to the gym and wait until they are the first vehicle in line pulled up to the entrance.
- A faculty member will open the doors at 8:50 A.M. and students may begin to disembark, one vehicle at a time.
- Vehicles should then proceed off the property in a **ONE WAY TRAFFIC FLOW**, going out to Salisbury Street (vehicles **SHOULD NOT** exit to Bailey Road).
- The front entrance should only be used when parents are dropping students off late, so as to ensure that the driveway is clear of bus traffic and safe for students to cross the driveway. Students should not be let out of cars in the parking lot to cross the driveway unaccompanied by an adult.

### **8.1.6. Vacations during School Time, Makeup Work**

Families are expected to plan any family trips/vacations so as to not take place on days when school is in session, but to plan these to coincide with school vacation periods. As per the State Department of Education, students who are absent for reasons other than medical ones for the State MCAS testing will be recorded as “failing” the test and the School’s test performance record will be affected accordingly.

The Department of Education further points out that students who are absent from school for reasons other than illness or family emergency are “truant”. As per the Department of Education, schools are

not required to plan for work for student absences other than illness or family emergency or to make up instruction or work for students who are absent for other reasons.

Students who have been absent must assume the responsibility for making up work. It is very difficult for the teacher to send work with a child to do in advance. It is expected that the work that will be missed will be given when the student returns to school for completion. If a student is absent for illness or family emergency for a prolonged period of time, he/she will be given an adequate amount of time to make up for the work missed. Upon return to school, a student who is absent for any other reason will have one day for every day of absence plus one to make up and submit all work missed during the absence.

It is recommended that parents request class assignments for a sick child to work on at home if absence exceeds more than one day. These assignments can be picked up in the school office. This can prevent a child from being overwhelmed by having to make up missed schoolwork while trying to keep up with current assignments when he/she returns to school.

Please avoid scheduling vacations or appointments during testing. The MCAS testing schedule is determined by the State of Massachusetts and notification will be sent home as soon as possible.

## **9. General Information**

### **9.1. Pre-School Screening**

Parents may request pre-school screening for their child (age 3 and above) if they believe there may be a possible learning problem. 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.

Prior to kindergarten each child is screened for possible vision and hearing problems. All children who have entered the Kindergarten Program are screened for vision, hearing, gross and fine motor skills, language delays and speech.

### **9.2. Kindergarten Entrance**

#### **9.2.1. Registration**

Registration begins in early February. Kindergarten Orientation occurs prior to the end of the school year.

#### **9.2.2. School Entrance**

Any child entering Kindergarten shall have attained the age of five (5) years on or before August 31st.

Any child entering first grade shall have attained the age of six (6) years on or before August 31st.

The parent seeking entrance of a child to first grade who does not meet the age requirements but who has completed an accredited Kindergarten program in a public or private school, and whose records indicate that the child is ready for first grade, may be allowed to enter first grade at the discretion of the principal.

To be eligible for entrance, the following must be brought or sent to the school with the completed registration papers:

- Birth Certificate (if it an original is copied and later returned to the parents),
- Record of all immunizations.



Parents should inform the school of any disabilities, health concerns and of any information that they feel might affect their child's ability to function in school.

### **9.3. Media Center- Library**

The library has reading and reference materials and is used for story hours and library instruction. Children are allowed to take up to two books at a time for a period of up to two weeks. It is the responsibility of the children to see that the books are properly taken care of at home, or while in their possession. There is a charge for lost books.

#### **9.3 a. Social Media P6531.1A**

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

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.

### **9.4. Art**

There is a dual philosophy to the art program: (1) that art stands alone as an important basic educational area in its own right, and (2) it is an important integrating force with respect to other subject areas such as, reading, math, science and social studies. Emphasis is placed on one or both objectives at a time. Experience in materials, techniques and concepts are presented.

### **9.5. Music**

As with art, music has a dual philosophy to its approach: (1) that a comprehensive and sequential music education stands alone in its own right and (2) that music is one of the ways children are known to learn; it helps to develop multicultural understanding and to develop the skills needed for reading, writing and listening. Experience in listening to a wide variety of music is provided along with musical programs as scheduling allows and recorder lessons are taught in grade three.

### **9.6. Physical Education**

Classes are scheduled out of doors in good weather and in the gym during the colder months and inclement weather. The program provides a range of activities allowing for all the children to participate, both as individuals and as part of a team.

**Sneakers are a must for gym classes.** As for other dress, the children wear their regular school clothes. It is recommended that clothing be able to provide full freedom of motion without exposing skin. Wear a belt if necessary. Low hanging pants, tank tops and shirts that expose skin when arms are raised

overheard should be avoided. A sweatshirt or jacket is recommended for outdoor physical education. Students are allowed to bring a water bottle to class.

## **9.7. 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, with identified disabilities who require specialized instruction.

For further information, please contact the School Psychologist.

## **9.8. Student Success Team (SST)**

The Student Success Team is composed of an administrator, the school psychologist and the referring teacher. Other staff may sometimes be asked to participate as well. The purpose is to help students when challenges arise with either academic or social emotional learning. The Team makes recommendations for classroom interventions/strategies or additional assessment. If accommodations are recommended, it reconvenes at a later date to assess the effectiveness of those recommendations. Referral to SST does not mean an automatic referral for special education evaluation. Parents will be notified about the recommendations of a SST meeting, but at this level of intervention their involvement is not required.

## **9.9. Special Education**

The Special Education Program offers support for children with identified disabilities who have difficulty learning in the regular classroom. Several instructional aides support special education students. Special Education teachers coordinate the evaluation of students who are experiencing learning problems. The special education teachers occasionally conduct individual and small group classes. They often prescribe specific learning approaches to be used by classroom teachers and co-plan and co-teach classes with the regular classroom teachers.

## **9.10. Speech and Language Therapy**

Students with speech, voice and language difficulties may receive services as indicated by an Individual Educational Plan (IEP). A speech and language therapist is available to work primarily with children who have been evaluated under Chapter 766 (see Chapter 766 above).

## **9.11. Home Tutoring**

Home Tutoring is available for extended student absence due to illness and/or serious injury, or for children with a Chronic Illness Plan. Parents needing this service should contact the School Administration.

## **9.12. Report Cards/Progress Reports**

Report cards are issued for grades K-5, 3 times a year. Parent teacher conferences will occur for all students in grades K-5. Final report cards (Grades K - 5) will not be issued until the last day of school. Parents may view Report Cards through the parent portal on PowerSchool. Progress reports are provided to parents of students receiving special education services.

## **9.13. Parent/Teacher Communication**

Parents and teachers may communicate effectively in a number of ways (e.g., phone, letter, e-mail, etc.). However, as a result of a need/concern/issue, a parent or teacher may request a conference to discuss the issue. Parents and teachers should arrange for such a meeting at a mutually convenient time contingent to the school day. Voicemail may be left for individual teachers by calling the main number (508-829-6828).

## **9.14. Audio, Video and/or Stenographic Recording of Meetings (WRSDC P3813)**

The Wachusett Regional School Committee prohibits the audio, video and/or stenographic recording of parent/teacher conferences and/or Team meetings conducted in Wachusett Regional School District facilities. Exceptions to this policy will be made only where a parent/guardian or student is able to demonstrate that either the audio, video and/or stenographic recording of the meeting or conference is necessary to ensure the parent's/guardian's or student's full understanding of the proceedings or to otherwise accommodate a parent's/guardian's or student's documented disability.

Requests by a parent/guardian or student for authorization to audio, video and/or stenographic record a meeting or conference shall be submitted in writing to the Superintendent of the Wachusett Regional School District no less than three (3) business days prior to said meeting/conference. The Superintendent's decision on any such request shall be final.

## **9.15. Radios, Cell Phones, Messaging Devices, other Electronic Devices, etc.**

Students **may not** bring cell phones, IPODs, or other similar items to school because they disrupt the educational process. Exceptions to the rule may be made only when items in question are used for classroom activities and when administrative approval is obtained. Portable games or other electronic devices such as those listed above are NOT permitted on field trips. Laser pointers are not allowed at school and will be confiscated. Inappropriate use of laser pointers will be considered a violation of the weapons policy **P6433**.

## **9.16. Homework**

If you wish to give valuable assistance to the education of your child, you can do so by encouraging your child to take pride in passing in neat and carefully completed assignments. The teacher should merely have to check the paper for accuracy.

If the homework is incomplete after a serious attempt has been made over this period of time, the parent should write a note to the teacher stating the amount of time spent and that the homework was seriously attempted although incomplete. If any emergency arises, and your child is unable to complete his/her homework, please write a note to the teacher. However, this does not excuse the student from completing the assignment the following evening. Other out of school activities do not constitute a reason for a student being excused from completion of homework. If a notice from the school that requires a parental signature gets misplaced, a note from the parent stating that the information was reviewed will be accepted in lieu of the parent signature slip.

## **9.17. Student Transfers**

Please inform us if you are moving and let us know the last day (date) that your child will attend Dawson School. We will also need your new address and the name of the next school your child will attend.

The parents must sign certain release forms so that school records may be forwarded to your new school. Your child will need a transfer card to present at the Principal's Office at the new school. Records will not be given to parents for transit, but will be sent to the school upon request.

### **9.18. Assignment of Students to Classes**

Every effort is made to ensure that your child is placed in a classroom that will enhance their learning experience. Classroom placement is determined by the principal based on the recommendation of the sending grade level teachers and input from parent surveys, guidance and special education personnel.

## **10. Miscellaneous Information**

### **10.1 Financial Assistance**

Occasionally, money is collected from students to cover expenses related to field trips, special programs, snacks in Kindergarten, etc. Financial constraints should never prevent participation of students in educational programs of the school. Any family needing assistance in this regard should contact the principal. All such contact will remain confidential.

### **10.2 Hot Lunch Program and Breakfast at School - Free for 2024-2025**

Hot lunches, including milk, are available throughout the year. For those wishing to bring a cold lunch, milk is available. A child may buy more than one carton if he/she chooses. Alternate sandwiches and salads are also available. Annual lunch and milk fees shall be provided at the start of the school year. Hot lunches begin the first day of school.

We have a computerized lunch system. Every student is given a unique pass code that they enter to access their account to pay for their lunch. Parents are encouraged to pre-pay for their child's lunch. This money is placed in an account that a child may use to purchase lunch or milk, but not snacks. Parents can pay by the week, month or year. This system is an effective means of purchasing lunch and students no longer have to worry about losing their lunch money. The Dawson School is happy to share that we have a Breakfast program for students who wish to have Breakfast at school.

### **10.5 Recess/Snacks**

Snacks may be eaten at designated times only (i.e., lunch, recess and special occasions). Gum chewing is not allowed at any time at Dawson School or on the school bus. Eating is also not allowed on the school bus.

### **10.6 Birthday Snacks**

Due to the many food allergies, medical conditions, and other food related issues, we are requesting that children not bring in snacks for sharing. If you feel that you still want to send something in, birthday pencils, colored pencils, erasers, or other school supplies are alternatives to snacks. Although we do not celebrate with a snack, your child will be recognized by their teacher and at morning announcements.

### **10.7 School Evacuation/Critical Incident Drills**

Drills are held regularly to ensure the safety of all persons in the event of fire, disaster or critical incident. Students are instructed in understanding signals, exits used, procedures for leaving the building, areas in which to assemble, and procedures for returning to the building.

Periodic checks by our fire department are conducted.

### **10.8 School Bus Evacuation Drills**

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

## **10.9 WRSD Dress/Personal Attire**

Neatness, cleanliness, and appropriateness are the keystones of school dress and appearance in the Wachusett Regional School District. Personal dress and appearance may not violate reasonable standards of health, safety, cleanliness, and may not result in disruption or disorder within the school.

The WRSD Dress Code for school and school functions hopes to achieve three goals:

1. Promote a respectful learning environment.
2. Promote a safe learning environment where dress does not interfere with the successful and safe completion of learning activities.
3. Promote an equitable and inclusive learning environment in which the dress code does not negatively impact any group based on race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, socio-economic status, and/or body type/size.

The responsibility of proper dress and grooming rests primarily with the student and his/her/their parents or guardians. We ask that students and parents/guardians work to ensure that the goals outlined above are being met with the student's school dress attire.

Hoods, except those worn in relation to required religious practice or with prior administrative approval due to a disabling condition, may not be worn within the school building as such headwear interferes with the identification of students and presents safety concerns. Sunglasses are not to be worn inside the building except with medical authorization and prior approval of the school administration.

Offensive clothing can sometimes be subjective to the individual; however, students should be aware that if symbols, words, or pictures on clothing cause, or are reasonably forecast to cause, a substantial disruption of the school environment, they will be asked to remove and replace the offensive clothing. Offenders may be subject to other disciplinary action as well. To this end, we ask that students and parents be considerate of how dress choices affect the safety and comfort of others. Clothing may not depict, advertise, or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances, and weapons.

In addition, a student's personal dress and appearance must comply with any and all applicable state and federal health and safety regulations, especially while attending a lab or shop.

## **10.10 Bicycle/Scooter Policy**

Children in Grades 4 and 5 are allowed to ride their bicycles or scooters to and from school, but are not allowed to ride or play with them on school grounds during school hours. **A note from home giving permission to ride to and from school is required.** The students should walk the bicycle or scooter to and from the proper area (i.e., bicycle rack). The privilege of riding bicycles to school will be taken away at any time if the child does not follow safety procedures or is being harmful to other students. State law requires all children below the age of sixteen wear a helmet while riding. Students will not be allowed to ride a bicycle or scooter home if they are not wearing a helmet. Bike/scooter riders will be dismissed after traffic has cleared. Bikes and scooters must be walked off school property. For safety reasons, children should refrain from riding bikes or scooters during inclement weather.

### **10.11 Parties/Celebrations**

Brief parties are occasionally held for some special occasions. Parents and teachers organize refreshments for these parties.

### **10.12 Gift Giving**

Students may donate gifts that enhance the classroom or school such as markers, glue sticks, books, etc. in lieu of personal gifts to mark any occasion. Books may also be donated to the school library.

### **10.13 Lost Articles**

The school will not assume responsibility for any items (brought to school by students), which are lost or stolen. A Lost and Found Table is maintained in the cafeteria. On a monthly basis, unclaimed clothing will be donated to GoodWill.

Pupils are encouraged to turn in any article found to the Lost and Found Table. Items coming to school, including lunch boxes, book bags, coats, hats, boots, and mittens should be clearly labeled with the student's first and last name.

### **10.14 Care of School Books**

School books, textbooks, library books, etc. are loaned to students. The student is responsible for the care of these books and must pay for any which are lost or damaged. Textbooks are to be kept covered at all times as directed by the classroom teachers.

Books that are lost or damaged must be paid for in total, including shipping costs.

### **10.15 School Phone**

Students will be permitted to use the telephone with permission of the teacher, the school secretary, or the principal.

Students will not be called to the telephone except in a case of an emergency. Similarly, messages to students will be delivered in an emergency.

### **10.16 Student Photographs**

As a service to parents, school photographs are taken in the fall at all grade levels. Information regarding fees and packages available is typically sent home prior to photographs being taken.

### **10.17 Wachusett Regional School Committee Policy on Students Publications (P6515)**

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 communities, and to this end, the following procedures are in effect:

- No school publication will accept advocacy or advertising that is political, religious or discriminatory in nature.
- All advertising is subject to review and approval by the principal or a designee relative to content and appropriateness.

- 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.
- This policy shall be referenced in the student handbook.
- A statement indicating the editorial control by the school administration regarding all advertising will be included on order forms or other similar correspondence.

### **10.18 School to Home Communication**

School-related and group-sponsored notices are periodically sent home with the students.

School-related notices such as the school newsletter, notices from the P.T.A., and notices from the principal are available on the website and sent home as the need arises.

To the extent possible, school wide notices are sent home on a weekly basis to each family through the youngest Dawson student in the family. Most notices and communication will be sent home through School Messenger.

### **10.19 Field Trips**

There are two types of field trips:

- Classroom - These are planned in conjunction with an area of study and may be walking or bus trips.
- General - These field trips are planned to include more than one class and are generally bus trips.

All field trips are chaperoned by classroom teachers, parents and sometimes-other staff. In order to participate in a field trip all adults **MUST** have a valid **CORI** badge.

### **10.20 Non-Smoking Policy**

As required by Massachusetts Education Reform legislation, smoking is not permitted by any person at any time, anywhere on school property (building or grounds).

### **10.21 Wachusett Regional School District Grievance Procedure for Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 (Federal Laws) and Chapter 622 (State Law)**

#### **10.21.1 Statement of Definition:**

A grievance is any alleged violation of the Wachusett District School Committee Policy on Non-Discrimination (P#6631) on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, in the operation of the educational programs, activities, or employment policies.

#### **10.21.2 Grievance Procedure:**

##### **Step #1**

An alleged grievance must be filed with the building coordinator (principal or designee) in writing within thirty (30) days of the alleged grievance. The building coordinator shall meet with and respond to the aggrieved party (in writing) within fifteen (15) days.

##### **Step #2**

If a satisfactory solution is not achieved at step #1, the aggrieved party may within fifteen (15) days upon receiving the decision rendered at step #1 file the alleged grievance with the Supervisor of Pupil

Personnel Services (for disability) or the Director of Administrative Services (for all others), who shall respond in writing and meet with the aggrieved party in an attempt to resolve the alleged grievance within fifteen (15) days.

### Step #3

If a satisfactory solution is not achieved at step #2 within the fifteen (15) day period, the alleged grievance may be filed at the next step with the school committee. The school committee shall provide an opportunity for the alleged grievance to be heard at its next regularly scheduled meeting and a decision shall be rendered in writing to the aggrieved party within fifteen (15) days.

### **10.21.3 Statement:**

1. An aggrieved party, if not satisfied with the decision of the school committee, may refer the case to the State Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148 (781-338-3300) and to the Office of Civil Rights, Region I, U.S. Department of Education, John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House, Room 701, Boston, MA 02109 (617-223-9662).
2. It is the intention of this grievance procedure to render due process regarding complaints or violations of this policy at each step of this grievance procedure.

## **11. Code of Conduct (P6400)**

The Wachusett Regional School District has a comprehensive student code of conduct. WRSD policies regarding behavior and discipline can be found through the District website or requested through the school.

The Wachusett Regional School District shall help students learn behavior patterns that 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 discipline. 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:

- age of the student;
- mitigating circumstances;
- previous behavior of the student; and



## **11.1. Introduction to Dawson Code of Conduct**

Dawson School strives to be a place where the optimal education can be obtained for each individual student.

We aim to create an environment:

- where people are courteous. Yelling, sarcasm and denigration are unacceptable.
- where laughter is frequently heard, not because of frivolous activity but because of genuine joy brought about by involvement with caring people engaged in relevant work.
- where communication is practiced and not preached. People talk with, not at, each other.
- that has reasonable rules, which everyone agrees on because they are beneficial to the individual and the group; and in which everyone has a democratic stake because everyone has a say in making and changing the rules as needs arise.
- where the administrators actively support and participate in an approach to discipline that teaches self-responsibility. They organize an on-going in-service program designed to support the discipline program. They model the techniques with students they are involved with and they positively support the staff as the staff practices the techniques of the program.

It is impossible for teaching or learning to take place in a school unless good order is maintained.

Students are reminded that they must adhere to a code of good behavior not only for their own benefit, but for the benefit of others as well.

## **11.2. General Rules and Consequences**

Students attending Dawson School are required to:

- Practice good manners;
- Display good citizenship;
- Respect the authority of school personnel;
- Show respect and concern for the rights and property of others;
- Show respect and concern for all school property;
- Be honest and faithful in word and action.

Students attending Dawson School are forbidden to engage in the following activities during school time or during school sponsored activities:

- Display aggressive behavior or exhibit any verbal or nonverbal behaviors that interfere with or threaten the safety or well-being of another person;
- Possess drugs, alcohol, or tobacco;
- Carry or wear dangerous weapons (i.e., sharp objects, firearms, knives/ household knives, laser pointers, or any devices or objects that could be used to inflict or threaten bodily harm);
- Possess matches or fireworks;
- Deface, damage, destroy, or steal school or personal property;
- Disrupt or instigate behavior that interferes with the operation of the school, classroom, auditorium, cafeteria or school buses;

- Possess indecent literature;
- Distribute any literature in class without permission from the teacher;
- Intentionally cause or attempt to cause physical injury to another person, except in self-defense;
- Leave school grounds without permission;
- Use profane, offensive or vulgar language;
- Be truant or have unexcused absences;
- Forge signatures;
- Lie;
- Cheat;
- Use cell phones, MP3 players, portable radios, CD players or other devices using headphones on school property or on field trips without prior approval by administration.

Failure to comply with established discipline practices and procedures may result in:

- Verbal reprimand
- Parent notification
- Loss of recess
- In-school suspension
- Out of school suspension or expulsion
- Any combination of the above

### **11.3. Specific Rules and Consequences**

#### **11.3.1. Classroom and Hallway Behavior**

The administration or teacher will take corrective action, with discretion and good judgment, if a child is removed from the classroom because of disruptive behavior such as:

- Abuse to peers;
- Consistently failing to follow directions.

Corrective Action may include:

- Verbal reprimand;
- Parent Notification;
- Requirement to sit or stand outside the classroom; this corrective action is to be considered the exception, not the rule;
- Loss of recess;
- In-school suspension;
- Any combination of the above.

#### **11.3.2. Basic Conduct in the Cafeteria**

- Enter quietly;
- Walk;
- Moderate talking volume;

- Handle and eat food in an appropriate manner;
- Keep hands to oneself.

Disciplinary Action: Children not complying with the above will be seated by themselves and/or lose recess privileges and/or lose the privilege of eating in the cafeteria.

### **11.3.3 Basic Conduct on the Playground**

- Avoid fights;
- Avoid carrying one another (piggyback rides, etc.);
- Avoid foul language and name-calling;
- Avoid leaving the playground without first getting permission of a monitor (includes use of bathroom and visits to nurse);
- Avoid picking up or kicking snow or throwing snowballs or ice;
- Bark chips may not be thrown;
- Students must obey monitors on duty.

### **11.3.4. Use of Playground and Equipment**

Again, common sense, courtesy and respect for others are expected so that accidents may be avoided. This includes:

- No undue height on swings; one child per swing;
- No side to side swinging, spinning or jumping off swings;
- No swinging until the area is dry;
- Jump ropes are to be used only for jumping;
- Playing catch must be done away from other children;
- Touch football is allowed for grades 3 through 5- no tackling or rough play (Nerf ball only);
- Keep balls away from windows;
- Baseball bats shall not be on the playground at recess unless approved by the principal;
- No karate type fake fighting activities;
- Chalk may be used to draw hopscotch;
- No sitting under equipment platforms to avoid injury while others play on equipment.

Other reminders:

- Students are to be dressed correctly for the weather. In winter months, permission is sometimes granted for students to play in the snow if they are wearing mittens, boots, hats and snow pants.
- Socks and sneakers are recommended to avoid splinters from bark chips and avoid falls on the structure.

### **11.3.5. Discipline at School Related Functions**

The school has the authority to discipline students for inappropriate behavior at Dawson School or Dawson School Activities.

### **11.3.6. Tolerance (WRSDC P6436)**

The Wachusett Regional School Committee shall provide a learning environment that promotes and encourages an appreciation of diversity.

Individual differences of students are to be appreciated and respected within district policies and regulations. All students can expect to grow and learn without encountering harassment about individual differences.

Intolerable activities include but are not limited to harassment about race, gender, sexual orientation, handicap, religion, ethnic group, appearance, dress, learning style, interests, or behaviors.

Bullying will not be tolerated. Bullying behaviors include but are not limited to teasing, verbal harassment, unwanted touches, physical attacks, and/or ostracism.

Reports of such conduct will be investigated and action will be taken under the guidelines of an individual school's disciplinary code.

Disciplinary Action related to District Tolerance Policy may include any/all of the following:

1. Parent notification;
2. Verbal reprimand by person in authority and/or removal from activity;
3. Loss of recess/removal from playground;
4. Loss of multiple recesses;
5. In-school suspension.

### **11.3.7 Anti-Bullying**

The complete WRSD Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan can be found at the end of this handbook.

### **11.3.8. School Bus Safety and Security Procedures P6621**

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 endanger the health, safety, and welfare of other riders or damages properties will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges.

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.

Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted at least twice a year to acquaint student riders with procedures in emergency situations.

All vehicles used to transport children will be inspected periodically for conformance with state and federal safety requirements.

Classroom instruction on school bus safety will be provided.

Children will not be allowed to go home with another child without a written note from a parent. Convenience bussing is not allowed. In cases of day care, consideration will be given, if there is space available.

**While waiting for the bus, students should:**

- Stay out of the road except when they must cross the street.
- Wait in an orderly manner. Rough behavior or running is inappropriate.
- Not throw stones, snowballs or other objects.
- Avoid trespassing on private property.
- Obey all school rules.
- Line up off the road and approach the bus only when the driver has opened the door.

**While riding the bus, students should:**

- Listen carefully to the driver's instructions.
- Get on the bus quickly and be seated. Pupils may be expected to sit three in a seat.
- Help keep the bus clean. Eating on the bus is not allowed.
- Be aware of the danger of protruding arms, etc. All parts of the child's body should be kept inside the bus.
- Remain in his/her seat when the bus is moving.
- Restrict his/her talking to those children who are sitting next to him/her. Shouting will distract the bus driver.
- Not use inappropriate language.
- Not fight.

**11.3.9. Alternate Student Transportation (WRSDC P6562)**

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.

### 11.3.10. Wachusett Regional School District Bus Discipline Policy and Procedure

#### BUS DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES AND CONSEQUENCES

The code below classifies unacceptable behavior into three levels. The examples are not exhaustive but illustrative. Additionally, all consequences are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the misbehavior. The administration reserves the right to consider extenuating circumstances in determining disciplinary action.

##### LEVEL 1

<p><b><u>Misbehaviors</u></b>          Misbehaviors that interfere with the orderly transportation of students. Some examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Talking too loudly</li> <li>● Failure to stay seated</li> <li>● Littering on the bus</li> <li>● Tampering with the possessions of other passengers</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Consequences</u></b>          The bus driver may address the misbehavior:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Verbal warning issued to student</li> <li>● Assign seats</li> </ul>
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##### LEVEL 2

<p><b><u>Misbehaviors</u></b>          More severe misbehaviors that interfere with the orderly transportation of students. Some examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Repeated occurrences of Level 1 behaviors</li> <li>● Annoying and/or bullying other passengers</li> <li>● Use of profanity</li> <li>● Damage to the bus</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Consequences</u></b>          The bus driver reports misbehaviors on the bus. The principal or designee administers consequences. This action may include any or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conference with principal or designee</li> <li>● Contact with parents</li> <li>● Assigned seats</li> <li>● Loss of bus privileges for up to five days</li> <li>● Suspension from school for up to five days</li> </ul>
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##### LEVEL 3

<p><b><u>Misbehaviors</u></b>          Behavior that endangers the safety of the driver or students and which impairs the driver's ability to drive safely. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Repeated occurrences of Level 1 or 2 behaviors</li> <li>● Refusal to remain in seats</li> <li>● Throwing objects, spitting, or spit balls</li> <li>● Distracting the driver</li> <li>● Refusal to obey driver</li> <li>● Fighting, including pushing and/or wrestling</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Consequences</u></b>          The bus driver reports misbehaviors on the bus. The principal or designee administers consequences. At more severe levels, the superintendent or designee may be involved. This action may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Loss of bus privileges for six to ten days</li> <li>● Suspension for 6 or more days or exclusion from school</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lighting matches/lighters</li> <li>• Possession of knives or other dangerous objects</li> <li>• Possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated incidents of Level 2 behavior or egregious acts may result in a child being permanently suspended from bus privileges</li> <li>• Illegal activity will be referred to the Police Department</li> </ul>
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**Procedures for reporting passenger misconduct**

1. The bus driver will report misconduct occurring on the school bus to the school administration. If a student shares information pertaining to student misconduct on the bus with a teacher or other staff member, the administration will be notified and speak with the bus driver.
2. A School Bus Conduct Report will be completed and submitted to the school administration and the bus company.
3. The principal or designee and the bus company will retain copies of the signed report.

**11.3.11 Special Education Discipline**

All students are expected to meet the standards for behavior as set by the Wachusett community. Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws and I.D.E.A. 1997 requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation team to have special needs and whose program is described in an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of special needs students:

1. The IEP for every special needs student will indicate if they can meet student management policies or if modifications are needed.
2. The principal (or designees) will notify the Special Education Office of any special needs student who has been suspended. The Director of Special Education will keep these suspensions on record.
3. When it becomes known that a special needs student will be suspended for more than ten days in a school year:
  - 3.1. services will be provided in order to ensure that the student receives FAPE (Free and Appropriate Education), and
  - 3.2. a functional behavioral assessment will be conducted and a behavioral intervention plan will be implemented, and
  - 3.3. the team will conduct a manifestation determination in order to decide whether the infraction related to the student's disability, and if the team finds that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, the District may not suspend the student.

**11.3.12 In-School Suspension**

The student will be isolated from the student body under the supervision of the administration. Students will be expected to complete assignments given by the classroom teachers. The amount of suspension time may range from one class to five days and may include recess and lunch.

**11.3.13 Out-of -School Suspension/Exclusion/Expulsion - Due Process**

Out-of-School Suspension/Exclusion/Expulsion - In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to suspend students from attending school. These instances involve serious disruptions of the school community, or when other forms of discipline do not appear to be effective.

## **Student Management Policies**

Dawson Elementary School is a superb school with a long tradition of excellence. We are proud of our curriculum instruction and education support. Our school environment can only remain strong, however, if we maintain order and proper decorum in our building. All members of the Dawson community are expected to treat themselves and other with respect. Dawson School has clean behavioral expectations for our students; there are consequences for those who choose to disobey our rules.

### **11.3.15 WRSD Weapons Policy 6435**

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.

### **11.3.16 WRSDC Substance Abuse Policy 6433**

The Wachusett Regional School District prohibits the use of alcohol, illegal substances, and the improper use of harmful substances.

The possession, use, transmittal, serving, or consumption of any alcoholic beverage, illegal/harmful substance on school property, and/or at any school-sponsored activity is prohibited. Violations of this policy shall result in appropriate action as set forth in the Student Discipline Code.

Further, any student may be barred from a school-sponsored activity if there is reason to believe he/she has been drinking alcoholic beverages or using illegal substances prior to his/her attendance at or participation in said school-sponsored activity. Students may be required to submit to a Breathalyzer test prior to participation in school-sponsored events. Any staff member with knowledge of alcohol or



harmful drug use or the carrying of harmful substances on school grounds or at school-related events shall notify the principal or the superintendent and the appropriate legal authorities.

The District shall provide full cooperation with legal authorities.

### **11.3.17 Procedures at Dawson School**

Drug and Alcohol Related Incidents will be dealt with as follows:

1. A student asking for help
  - 1.1. Parents will be involved and, if they so desire, school personnel will work with the student and the parent to resolve the problem.
  - 1.2. In-house or community services will be explored for possible assistance.
2. A student suspected of using drugs or alcohol within the school
  - 2.1. If there is cause to suspect that the student is under the influence of a drug or alcohol, the principal shall inform the parents, a conference will be held, and the principal may suspend the student up to five (5) days.
  - 2.2. Police will become involved at this point on an informal basis.
3. A student present where a drug or alcohol is found
  - 3.1. If, in the judgment of the principal, the student was aware of the presence of drugs or alcohol, the parent shall be notified.
  - 3.2. Suspension is at the discretion of the principal (up to five [5] days).
  - 3.3. Notification of the problem shall be made to the police.
4. A student in possession of a drug or selling a drug on school property or at a school function
  - 4.1. The student shall be referred to the principal or to his/her designee.
  - 4.2. Parents will be notified immediately.
  - 4.3. Police shall be notified immediately and provided with the necessary information in order to determine if the material is an illegal substance.
  - 4.4. The student shall be suspended and referred to the Superintendent for further review and action he deems appropriate. This may include further suspension and/or expulsion.
5. A student in possession of alcohol
  - 5.1. Parents shall be informed.
  - 5.2. Student shall be suspended up to five (5) days.
  - 5.3. Police will be informed of an alcohol problem on an informal basis.

## **12 PROMOTING CIVIL RIGHTS AND PROHIBITING HARASSMENT, BULLYING, DISCRIMINATION AND HATE CRIMES P6437**

The Wachusett Regional School District is committed to providing our students equal educational opportunities and a safe learning environment free from harassment, bullying, 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, bullying, 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, bullying, 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.

**Bullying:**

Bullying is defined as a form of aggression involving a power imbalance between the bully and victim, where the bully has perceived or actual physical, social and/or psychological power over his/her target(s). Although bullying generally involves a pattern of conduct directed at a victim, depending on the severity of the incident, a single instance of such misconduct may constitute a violation of this Policy.

**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, bully, 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 s/he 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, Bullying, Discrimination or Hate Crimes:**

Students can report any case of harassment, bullying, 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, bullying, 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, s/he 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 discipline 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;
- the allegation involves bullying, where the District has intervened with the alleged student offender under the Code of Conduct for bullying on two prior occasions;
- 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 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, bullying, 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 Director of Student/Information 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.

### **13 Policy Relating to Sexual Harassment (P6434a)**

It is the policy of the Wachusett Regional School Committee to provide an educational environment free of sexual advances, request 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.151.C.

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. Any student who knowingly violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension, and/or expulsion.

Retaliation against a student for filing a complaint, under this policy or for assisting in an investigation of sexual harassment is a violation of this policy.

Any student who believes he or she has been the victim of sexual harassment should report the alleged harassment as soon as possible to a teacher, nurse, guidance counselor or school administrator who must convey the report to the building principal.

#### **13.1. 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:

Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's success as a student;

Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis of education decisions affecting such individual(s); or

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, and invading "personal space";

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).

### **13.2. 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:

Speak or send a note to any employee of the school district whom you trust, (i.e., nurse, psychologist/counselor, teacher, 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.

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.

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 employees fully and correctly understand 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.

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.

### **13.2.1. Informal Procedure:**

If the principal/superintendent feels that the complaint can be resolved without a formal investigation, he/she may use the informal procedure. 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.

### **13.3.2. Formal Procedure:**

The formal procedure is used when any one of the following occurs:

You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent asks that the formal procedure be used;

The principal/superintendent or his/her designee decides that the formal procedure should be used;  
or

You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent feels that the informal procedure was not helpful or adequate and one of the parties requests, within five (5) school days that the formal procedure be used.

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.

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 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.

### **13.3.3. 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.

### **13.3.4. 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.

### **13.3.5. Considerations to Remember:**

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.

The victim may be the same or opposite sex of the harasser.

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.

## **14. Dawson School Safety and Security Plan**

### **14.1. Access to School Building**

All doors will be locked during the school day. All visitors will be allowed entry by office personnel.

All visitors must report to the office upon entry. Signs will be located at all entrances to alert visitors to this request.

School volunteers will report to the office, sign in and wear an identification badge.

Unscheduled visits to classrooms will be discouraged without authorization from school administration.

#### **14.2. Safety in Classrooms**

Fire doors will be kept closed at all times.

Evacuation plans will be clearly marked and routes to egress will be clear and accessible.

Each classroom will have an individual monitoring system for students entering and leaving the room.

Equipment including but not limited to television carts and pianos will be moved by staff only.

Student daily attendance will be monitored at the start of each school day and parents of absent children will be notified.

#### **14.3. Safety in Hallways**

Students are expected to **walk** at all times in the hallways. Running and “speed walking” are not allowed in order to maintain maximum safety.

Teachers will be located in classroom doorways at arrival and dismissal to supervise hallway and classroom conduct.

Groups of students (gym, art, and music classes) will be supervised by an adult when moving between classes.

An adult will supervise all bus lines through the building, outside and on to the bus to insure safe loading.

#### **14.4. Safety on School Grounds**

Rules will be defined and published for safe use of the playground.

The school will provide adequate adult supervision at each recess break.

The gate will be closed to prevent through traffic from the rear entrance to the school grounds.

An adult will accompany walkers until they leave school property.

In accordance with state law, any child sixteen years of age or younger must wear a helmet while on a bicycle path or public way.

#### **14.5. Responsibilities of the Staff and the Plan Implementation**

Staff will:

Be alert to student welfare at all times.

Exercise good judgment in planning and implementing any instructional or other activity.

Notify the office should any strangers be observed in or around the building.

Review the rules for school evacuation procedures with aides and volunteers.

Annually review with the school nurse the rules for proper precaution when dealing with bodily fluids.

Inspect interior and exterior grounds regularly to insure safe conditions.

## **15. Students' Records/Internet Disclosure**

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: WRSDC P6910**

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.

As of 1998 Massachusetts law (MGL Chapter 71, § 34H) specifies detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents who do not have physical custody of their children. For more information, contact the building principal.

In reference to the Internet, use of a student's name, photo or samples of their work on the Internet or District web page must be in accordance with the Wachusett Regional School Committee Policy P6531 *Policy Relating to Pupil Services Student Internet Policy*, which **requires prior written parental approval**. School principals shall provide appropriate authorization and release to be executed by parent/guardian prior to release publication or posting of such information.

## **16. Notice to Parents of Rights of Exemption: Human Sexual Education**

Wachusett Regional School District has developed a K-12 Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework, which was approved by the Wachusett Regional School Committee in October 1996. This framework is available in all of the District's schools. This program was developed by members of the professional staff and reviewed by members of the community. The overall goal of the course is to promote the health and well being of our students and to help them make wise and informed decisions throughout their lives.

Sex education is part of the health education curriculum beginning in Grades 4 and 5, including puberty and male and female anatomy, followed progressively through the grades by such topics as dating; relationships and communication skills; pregnancy; birth control; abortion; homosexuality; prevention of

HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; and prevention of sexual abuse. Specific curriculum outlines for particular grade levels will also be available for review. If you would like to review these materials at the school, you are welcome to do so. Please call to arrange a convenient time.

During instructional time, students will be able to ask questions, which will be answered factually and in an age-appropriate manner. Each student's privacy will be respected, and no one will be put on the spot to ask or answer questions or reveal personal information. Material will be presented in a balanced, factual way that makes clear that people may have strong religious and moral beliefs about issues such as birth control and abortion and that these beliefs must be respected.

Under Massachusetts General Law and School Committee Policy, you may exempt your child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. To receive an exemption, simply send a letter to the principal requesting an exemption for your child. No student who is exempted from this portion of the curriculum will be penalized. An alternative assignment may be provided to students who are exempted.

Refer to Wachusett Regional School Committee Policy 3313.1

## **17. Rules for Student Use of Internet and Email**

While the Wachusett Regional School Committee encourages the use of electronic communication to promote excellence in education, the School Committee also recognizes its responsibility to reasonably ensure the anonymity of students using the District's Internet to ensure this goal.

The District prohibits non-educational use of its network facilities, the Internet and the Internet access.

Access and use of the District's Internet is a privilege, not a right, and access to it may be denied to students violating this policy.

The District prohibits student use of "chat" lines without the permission and supervision of authorized professional staff members.

The District shall limit student use of email to District supervised programs.

Each school shall include within the student handbook procedures, rules and responsibilities pertaining to student Internet access, which are age appropriate. The handbook shall also contain procedures on the following:

At the elementary school level

Student work may be displayed on the school site web pages or District web page with the student's first name only when prior written permission is received from the parent/guardian annually.

Photographs of students may be displayed on the school site web pages or District web page identified only by classroom teacher or grade when prior written permission is received from the parent/guardian annually.

## **18. Information Regarding Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

The Wachusett Regional School District will identify, evaluate and provide an appropriate public education to students who are disabled within the meaning of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Further information may be obtained from your school's principal or Catherine Knowles, the Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services.

## **19. Child Find**

The Wachusett Regional School District wishes to identify all children, ages three years to twenty-one years, who reside within the District, have not yet graduated from high school, and who are in need of special education and related services. Any child suspected of having a disability and believed to be in need of special education and related services may be referred to the Administrator of Special Education, Wachusett Regional School District, Jefferson School, 1745 Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522, (508) 829-1670 extension 238.

## **20. Policies Relating to Communication/Public Relations**

### **Distribution of Notices by Students (P8130)**

The Wachusett Regional School District shall permit the distribution of school-sponsored, PTO/PTA-sponsored and District related notices via the District's students.

Such distribution may include notices from non-profit groups when they are related to school sponsored activities.

In addition, notices regarding Member Town events for children, such as recreation, sports, the library and the like, may be distributed via District students.

All notices to be distributed shall be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

All materials disseminated by a non-school group should not be construed as being school sponsored or endorsed, nor shall the District be considered a partner or agent or otherwise responsible for the activities of the non-school group. The Superintendent may require that the non-school group provide a disclaimer of district sponsorship of its material.

A non-school group's material should not be distributed to students during instructional time and, if possible, should not be intermingled with official school notices. Students should not be compelled to take home or read any such materials.

No materials involving solicitation, proselytizing, or for-profit activities shall be accepted for distribution. School newsletters and notices to parents may not publicize non-school groups or recruit new members for such groups. No notices from private groups will be accepted except as specified above.

## **21. Distribution of School Committee Publications (P1523)**

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.

## **22. Policies Relating to Education**

### **22.1. Online Education Policy (P3311.31)**

The Wachusett Regional School Committee supports technology as a tool for learning and supports online education as a viable methodology for delivery of direct instruction. Online education should provide an opportunity for students to accelerate the curriculum, to complete the curriculum and to provide learning opportunities in areas not available to the student due to scheduling conflicts or uniqueness of offering. Online education should also be promoted as a tool for staff development. Consideration for online education may include:

The course is not offered at the school;

Although the course is offered at the school, the student will not be able to take it due to an unavoidable scheduling conflict;

The course will serve as a supplement to extend instruction to those students who would be unable to attend classroom instruction;

Students who have been expelled from the regular school setting but who are eligible for continued educational services; or

In unique situations where there is consensus among student, teacher and administrative staff that, due to the differentiating needs of the student whether it be to accelerate and reinforce learning or for advanced learning opportunities, the student would require an additional service.

Requests for taking online courses may come from the student, the teacher or the parent. The school principal, in consultation with staff, shall make the final determination as to the acceptability of the course and upon approval, shall fund the course from the school budget, subject to availability of school funds. Consideration by the principal and school staff should include the educational workload of the student, the eligibility of the student to take such a course, equitable access and prerequisites.

Provision for monitoring and assessment of the progress of students who are provided with online learning opportunities should be included in the implementation plan. The school should establish standards and criteria of performance along with a mechanism of assessment for any student involved in the online education program. Students and parents should be made aware annually of this policy.

### **22.2. Non-Discrimination of Educational Materials (P3450)**

The Wachusett Regional School District is committed to ensuring equal educational opportunities for all students, and does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin or sexual orientation.

As such, the Wachusett Regional School District supports a consistent process whereby textbooks and instructional materials are reviewed for bias and stereotyping, with the intent of maintaining a balanced curriculum.

Materials deemed unacceptable for students will be shared with the School Committee for final determination.

### **22.3. Enrichment (P3611.4)**

The Wachusett Regional School Committee is committed to providing a high quality for all students with the goal of maximizing the performance and achievement of every individual. Staff are 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 to all students 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.

## **23. Behavior and Discipline**

### **23.1. Student Handbook**

The student handbook shall annually be reviewed with input sought from 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. (definitions included in each section)

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, non-discriminatory and non-arbitrary manner.

### **23.2. 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.

### **23.3. Corporal Punishment**

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

### **23.4. 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 warrantless 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.

### **23.5. Student Suspensions**

The Wachusett Regional School District shall ensure that each pupil has an atmosphere and an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. To that end, schools shall maintain programs that 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 that 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.

### **23.6. 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, section 37h and 37h1/2, and Ch.76 section 17.

## **24. Athletics**

### **24.1. Academic requirements**

1. Students must pass all subjects as reported on the most recent formal communication with parents.
2. Waivers may be granted upon the recommendation of the principal.

### **24.2. Behavioral requirements**

The student must demonstrate appropriate behavior according to school standards. At the sole discretion of the principal, a student may be declared ineligible for participation because of chronic misbehavior or an incident of serious or major misconduct according to school standards.

Students scheduled to attend after-school disciplinary sessions on the day of a practice or game must attend the disciplinary session before being able to participate in the athletic activity. Students who are serving a suspension (internal or external) on the day of a practice or game are not allowed to participate in the athletic program activity on that day.

### **24.3. Physical Fitness requirements**

A note from the student's physician that the student has had a physical in the past thirteen months or 395 days and is not restricted in any way from participating in the program is required.

**WRSD Student Handbook Addendum**  
**Policies and Procedures**



**2024-2025**

The Wachusett Regional School District does not tolerate discrimination or harassment of students, parents, employees, or the general public on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status, disability, homelessness, religion, age, or immigration status. Consistent with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act, the District also does not discriminate against students on the basis of homelessness.

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## **Nondiscrimination Statement**

The Wachusett Regional School District does not tolerate discrimination or harassment of students, parents, employees, or the general public on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status, disability, homelessness, religion, age, or immigration status. Consistent with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act, the District also does not discriminate against students on the basis of homelessness.

## **Use of Cameras / Surveillance**

Parents, guardians, and students should be aware that security cameras and video recording systems are in use at all WRSD schools, for the purposes of monitoring the interior and exterior of school buildings, to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of students, staff, and visitors, and to protect school facilities.

While riding on buses or vans, students are under the jurisdiction of the school administration. For purposes of monitoring and student safety, school transportation vehicles may be equipped with video and audio recording systems. All students may be subject to video and audio surveillance for this purpose while riding a school bus or van.

## **Physical Restraint Information**

The Wachusett Regional School District complies with the requirements of Massachusetts statutes and regulations governing the use and reporting of physical restraint in schools. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37G; 603 CMR 46.00. Physical restraint is defined as direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint does not include: brief physical contact to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

Physical restraint is considered an emergency procedure of last resort and may be used only when: (a) the student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others; and (b) less intrusive interventions are ineffective or deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances. Physical restraint in a public education program shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. Physical restraint is prohibited in the following circumstances: (a) as a means of punishment; or (b) as a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm.

In the event that a physical restraint is administered, the parents/guardians will be notified orally within twenty-four (24) hours of the restraint and shall be provided with a written Restraint Report within three (3) school days of the restraint. 603 CMR 46.06.

## **Disciplinary Due Process**

### STUDENT SUSPENSIONS AND/OR EXPULSIONS:

#### NOTICE OF SUSPENSION HEARING:

Except in the case of an emergency removal or disciplinary offense defined under M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H1/2 or an in-school suspension as defined by 603 CMR 53.02(6), the school shall provide the student and parent/guardian with written and oral notice of the proposed out-of-school suspension, an opportunity to be heard at hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing.

The Notice shall set forth in plain language:

- A. the disciplinary offense;
- B. the basis for the charge;
- C. the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- D. the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal or principal's designee concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
- E. the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- F. the right of the student and student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

The principal, or principal's designee, shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. In order to conduct a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the principal, or principal's designee, must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. Reasonable effort is presumed if the principal or principal's designee sent written notice and documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency situations.

All written communications regarding notice of proposed suspension shall be either by hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal/principal's designee and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

#### SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND DETERMINATION

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. Out-of-school short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) school days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

**Principal's Hearing.** The purpose of the hearing with the principal or the principal's designee for such purposes, is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances. Under applicable regulations, students do not have a right to be represented by an attorney at a short-term suspension hearing.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal or principal's designee will make a determination whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequence. The principal or principal's designee will provide notification in writing of his/her determination and provide reasons for the determination. If the student is suspended, the principal/principal's designee

shall inform the parent/guardian of the type and duration of the suspension, and shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up assignments and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. If the student is in grades pre-k through 3, the principal/principal's designee shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect. All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

Students do not have the right to appeal a short-term suspension imposed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4 and 603 CMR 53.00.

#### LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND DETERMINATION

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. The purpose of the hearing with the principal or principal's designee is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, to provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, to determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal or principal's designee will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

- i. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal or principal's designee may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- ii. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and/or parent's/guardian's expense;
- iii. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school;
- iv. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal or principal's designee. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request.

Based on the evidence submitted at the hearing the principal/principal's designee shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension (the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports) what remedy or consequence will be imposed. If the principal/principal's designee decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:

- i. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
- ii. Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the principal/principal's designee;
- iii. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
- iv. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make academic progress while suspended, and the contact information of a school member who can provide more detailed information.
- v. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's/designee's decision to impose a long-term suspension to the superintendent or his/her designee for said purpose within five (5) calendar days, which may be extended by parent/guardian request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent/superintendent's designee decides to reverse the principal's/principal's designee's determination on appeal. If the student is in grades pre-k through grade 3, the principal/principal's designee shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect. All written communications regarding the hearing and principal's/designee's determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal/principal's designee and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or by other means of communication where appropriate.

#### APPEAL OF LONG-TERM SUSPENSION

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the principal's/ principal's designee's decision to the superintendent if properly and timely filed. A good faith effort shall be made to include the parent/guardian at the hearing. The appeal shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the superintendent shall grant.

The student and parent/guardian shall have the same rights afforded at the long-term suspension principal hearing. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the superintendent or superintendent's designee shall issue his/her written decision which meets the criteria required of the principal's determination. If the superintendent or superintendent's designee determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent/designee may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the principal. The decision of the superintendent/superintendent's designee on the student's appeal shall constitute the final decision of the school district with regard to the student's long-term suspension.

#### EMERGENCY REMOVAL

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense within the scope of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4 and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's/principal's designee's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal. During the emergency removal the principal/designee shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The principal/designee may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation. The principal/designee shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of 603 CMR 53.08 within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal/principal's designee, student, and parent/guardian.

A decision shall be rendered orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day.

#### IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION UNDER 603 CMR 53:02(6) & 603 CMR 53.10:

In-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not the school premises, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions over the course of the school year. An in-school suspension may be used as an alternative to short-term suspension.

A principal or principal's designee may impose an in-school suspension as defined above according to the following procedures:

The principal/principal's designee shall orally inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal/principal's designee determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal/principal's designee shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed ten (10) days, cumulatively or

consecutively, in a school year. On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal/principal's designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal/principal's designee shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal/principal's designee is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

The principal/principal's designee shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal/principal's designee for the purpose set forth above, if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal/principal's designee shall deliver such notice on the day of the in-school suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal/principal's designee and the parent.

SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FOR DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES UNDER M.G.L. 71 §37H and/or 37H1/2: The due process notification and hearing requirements in the preceding sections do not apply to the following disciplinary offenses:

- I. Possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or assault of school staff. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H. A student may be subject to long-term suspension or expulsion if found in possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or the student assaults a member of educational staff.
- II. Issuance of felony or felony delinquency charges against a student/ Finding or admission of guilt to a felony charge/felony delinquency. A student who has been charged with a felony/felony delinquency may be subject to long-term suspension if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. A student who has been convicted of, or who has admitted guilt in a court of law to, a felony or felony delinquency charge may be expelled from school if the principal determines at the student's staff, and the principal determines the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

\* All hearings to consider a student's suspension in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H and/or M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2 shall be conducted by the building principal and not by a principal's designee. Appeals of suspensions or expulsions imposed accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H and/or M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2 shall be conducted by the superintendent of schools and not by the superintendent's designee.

Due Process Procedures M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H:

The principal shall notify the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing of the opportunity for a hearing, and the right to have representation (at private expense) at the hearing, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses on the student's behalf. After said hearing, the a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to impose a long-term suspension rather than expulsion. A student who is suspended from school on a long-term basis or expelled for such an infraction shall have the right to appeal the decision to the superintendent. The student shall have ten (10) calendar days from the date of the long-term suspension/expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel (at private expense) at the hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student was guilty of the alleged offense. The superintendent's decision on the student's appeal shall constitute the final decision of the school district with regard to the student's long-term suspension or expulsion.

Except where circumstances warrant the student's immediate short-term, interim removal from the school premises due to immediate safety concerns or substantial disruption of the school environment, a student



shall not be suspended or expelled from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H until a hearing in which the student and parents have the opportunity to participate is conducted by the principal. Prior to the imposition of any such short-term interim removal, the principal shall, at a minimum conduct a preliminary informal hearing with the student to inform the student of the violation(s) of which the student is accused and provide the student with the opportunity to respond thereto.

Due Process Procedures M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2:

Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony, or the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal may suspend a student for a period of time determined appropriate by the principal if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. Except where circumstances warrant the student's immediate short-term, interim removal from the school premises due to immediate safety concerns or substantial disruption of the school environment, a student shall not be suspended or expelled from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2 until a hearing in which the student and parents have the opportunity to participate and to be represented by an attorney (at private expense) is conducted by the principal.

Prior to the hearing to consider the student's long-term suspension or expulsion in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2, the principal shall notify the student and parents in writing of the charges and of the date and time of a hearing to consider the Student's possible long-term suspension or expulsion at which the student has the right to be represented by an attorney (at private expense) and to present evidence and witnesses in the student's defense. Upon the conclusion of said hearing, and prior to the effective date of any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed, the principal shall issue a written decision notifying the student and parents of the principal's findings and determinations, the effective date and length of any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed, and of the student's right to appeal to the superintendent any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed by the principal within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the principal's decision.

Superintendent Appeals M.G.L. 71, § 37H1/2:

The hearing on the student's appeal of any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed by the principal shall be conducted within three (3) calendar days of the submission of the student's appeal request. Pending the superintendent's decision on the student's appeal, the long-term suspension or expulsion imposed by the principal shall remain in effect. At the appeal hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and the right to counsel (at private expense). The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal. The superintendent shall render a written decision on the student's appeal within five (5) calendar days of the appeal hearing.

SCHOOL-WIDE EDUCATION SERVICES PLAN FOR STUDENTS SUSPENDED OR EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL (M.G.L. c. 76, § 21, 603 CMR 53.13:

(1) Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. The principal shall inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

(2) Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide Education Service Plan.

(3) Each school has a process for developing a school-wide Education Service Plan for education services that the school district will make available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive school days. Students and their parents will be notified of the alternative educational services available to through the school or school district and of the process for arranging such services at the time of suspension/expulsion. Education services shall be based on, and be provided in a manner consistent with, the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under M.G.L. c 69, §§ 1D and 1F.(4)

Notice of Education Services for Students in Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion; Enrollment Reporting.

(a) The principal shall notify the parent and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or suspended in excess of ten (10) consecutive school days. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information.

(b) For each student expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, whether in school or out of school, the school district shall document the student's enrollment in education services. For data reporting purposes, the school shall track and report attendance, academic progress, and such other data as directed by the Department.

## DISCIPLINE AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the regulations issued pursuant to said statutes require that additional provisions be made for:

Students who have been found eligible for special education services under the IDEA.

Students who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for special education services. The school is deemed to have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability if before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred: (1) the student's parent/guardian expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel, or the student's teacher, that the student is in need of special education and related services; (2) the student's parent/guardian requested an evaluation of the child; or (3) the student's teacher, or other school personnel, expressed specific concerns directly to the director of special education or to other supervisory personnel about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.

The school is not deemed to have knowledge of a disability if (1) the parent/guardian has not allowed an evaluation or has refused special education and related services, or (2) the child has been evaluated and determined not to be a child with a disability.

Students who have been found to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

These students are generally entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short term removals that exceed ten (10) school days in a given year.

If a request is made for an evaluation of a student's eligibility for special education services during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary measures, the evaluation shall be conducted in an expedited manner. Until the evaluation is completed, the student shall remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities. If the student is subsequently found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for ten (10) school days or less in the school year to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from his/her program for more than ten (10) consecutive days in a given school year or subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a "disciplinary change of placement," building administrators, the parents/guardians, and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination).

If building administrators, the parents/guardians, and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will

continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPs. The student's IEP Team will identify the services necessary to be provided in addition to any services to which the student is entitled through the school's Education Services Plan so as to ensure the student's free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment of the student. Eligible Section 504 students shall be entitled to receive alternative education services in accordance with the school's Education Services Plan during any suspension or expulsion in excess of ten (10) consecutive days.

If building administrators, the parents/guardians, and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further removal or exclusion from the student's current education program for the incident of misconduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parents/guardians consent to, a new placement, or unless the school obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) or a court authorizing a change in the student's placement. The student's Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.

If a student with a disability possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a dangerous weapon on school grounds or at a school function, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds or at a school function, the school may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days regardless of whether the conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability. A court or BSEA Hearing Officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to forty-five (45) school days.

## **Selected Massachusetts Laws - Student Conduct**

### 1. M.G.L. c.71, § 37H – Policies Relative to Conduct of Teachers or Students: Student Handbooks

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H:

(A) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(B) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(C) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal may, in their discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

(D) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

(E) Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

### 2. M.G.L. c.71, § 37H ½ - Felony Complaint or Conviction of Student - Suspension; Expulsion; Right to Appeal

(1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of

the city, town, or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

(2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town, or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

M.G.L. c.71, § 37H <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> - Suspension or Expulsion on Grounds other than Those set forth in Secs. 37H or 37H <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

(a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H1/2.

(b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and shall not suspend or expel a student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive, and in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to, : (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving."

(c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

(d) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term "out-of-school suspension" shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.

(e) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

(f) No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school or school district for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is removed from an assigned school building.

#### 4. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37L – Notification to School Personnel of Reporting Requirements for Child Abuse and Neglect and Fires; Reports of Students Possessing or Using Dangerous Weapons on School Premises, Transferred Students' School Records

The school committee of each city, town or regional school district shall inform teachers, administrators, and other professional staff of reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect under section 51A of chapter 119 and the reporting requirements for fires under section 2A of chapter 148.

In addition, any school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time.

Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the superintendent of said school, who shall file copies of said weapon report with the local chief of police, the department of children and families, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local school committee. Said superintendent, police chief, and representative from the department of children and families, together with a representative from the office of student services or its equivalent, shall arrange an assessment of the student involved in said weapon report. Said student shall be referred to a counseling program; provided, however, that said counseling shall be in accordance with acceptable standards as set forth by the board of education. Upon completion of a counseling session, a follow-up assessment shall be made of said student by those involved in the initial assessment.

A student transferring into a local system must provide the new school system with a complete school record of the entering student. Said record shall include, but not be limited to, any incidents involving suspension or violation of criminal acts or any incident reports in which such student was charged with any suspended act.

## School Committee Policies

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### POLICY 1000 NON-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The Wachusett Regional School District does not tolerate discrimination or harassment of students, parents, employees, or the general public on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status, disability, homelessness, religion, age, or immigration status. Consistent with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act, the District also does not discriminate against students on the basis of homelessness.

The Superintendent shall designate at least one administrator to serve as the compliance officer for the District's non-discrimination policies in education-related activities, including but not limited to responding to inquiries related to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Americans with Disabilities Act; the Age Act; M.G.L. c. 76, § 5; M.G.L. c. 151B and 151C; and 603 C.M.R. § 26.00. Inquiries about the application of Title IX to the District may be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, or both.

The Wachusett Regional School District's 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 employment, admission to a public school of the District or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, pregnancy or pregnancy status, age, homelessness, disability or immigration status.

In addition to designating at least one administrator to handle inquiries regarding the District's non-discrimination policies, the Superintendent shall adopt and publish one or more grievance procedures for addressing reports of discrimination, harassment and retaliation under the protected classes identified in this policy. If an individual is interested in filing a complaint that they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, homelessness, disability, or immigration status, their complaint should be filed in accordance with the District's grievance procedures for discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

The student and personnel handbooks and grievance procedures shall identify the name, office address and telephone number for the compliance officer(s) for the above-referenced statutes. This policy and related grievance procedures shall be posted on the District's website.

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### POLICY 1020 NON-DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY

The Wachusett Regional School District believes that individuals with disabilities are integral members of the school community.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires that no qualified individual with a disability shall be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, employment opportunities, and activities of the school district or be subject to discrimination in District programs. Similarly, no school district shall exclude or otherwise deny services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known disability of a person with whom the individual is known to have a relationship or association. The Wachusett Regional School District complies with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

**Definition:** A "qualified individual with a disability" is an otherwise qualified individual, determined through an individualized process to have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and who, with or without reasonable modification to rules, policies, or practices, the

removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the District.

**Reasonable Modification:** The District shall make reasonable modification in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability or, in case of eligible students, to ensure a free appropriate public education as defined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

**Communications:** The District shall take the appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, students, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with non-disabled individuals. To this end, the District shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by the District. In determining what type of auxiliary aid or service is necessary, the District shall give primary consideration to the requests of the individuals with disabilities. Any decision that, in compliance with its responsibility to provide effective communication for individuals with disabilities, would fundamentally alter the service, program, or activity or unduly burden the District shall be made by the District's appointed ADA Coordinator after considering all resources available for use in funding and operating the program, service, or activity. A written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion shall accompany the decision.

**Auxiliary Aids and Services:** "Auxiliary aids and services" includes, but are not limited to: (1) qualified interpreters, note-takers, transcription services, written materials, assisted listening systems, and other effective methods for making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments; (2) qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, Braille materials, large print materials, or other effective methods for making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments; (3) acquisition or modification of equipment or devices; and (4) other similar services and actions.

**Limits of Required Modifications:** The District is not required to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens.

**Notice:** The District shall make available to applicants, participants, students, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provisions the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the applicability of those statutes to the services, programs, or activities of the District. The information shall be made available in such a manner as the School Committee and Superintendent find necessary to apprise such persons of the protections against discrimination assured them by the ADA and/or Section 504.

**Compliance Coordinator:** The District shall designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, including any investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance or alleging any actions that would be prohibited under the ADA and/or Section 504. The District shall make publicly available the name, office address, and telephone number of the employee(s) so designated and shall adopt and publish procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited under the ADA and/or Section 504.

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## **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.

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#### 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.

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#### 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.

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## 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

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#### 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.

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#### 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.

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### 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.
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### 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.

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## 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.
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