

HANDBOOK FOR HOUGHTON SCHOOL

SCHOOL YEAR 2024-2025

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

Albanian / shqiptar

Ne qofte se ju do te deshironit dokumentat te perkthyer ne gjuhen shqip. Ju mund ti kerkoni ne zyren qendrore te shkolles du eshte femija juaj.

Arabic / العربية

إذا كنت بحاجة الى هذه المواد المترجمة، يرجى الاتصال بالمكتب الرئيسي للمدرسة طفلك.

Chinese / 汉语

如果您需要翻译这些材料，请联系您孩子学校的主要办公室。

French / français

Si vous avez besoin de traduire ces documents, veuillez communiquer avec le bureau principal de l'école de votre enfant.

German / Deutsch

Wenn Sie diese Materialien benötigen, wenden Sie sich bitte an das Hauptbüro der Schule Ihres Kindes.

Greek / ελληνικά

Αν χρειάζεστε αυτά τα υλικά μεταφραστεί, παρακαλούμε επικοινωνήστε με το κεντρικό γραφείο του σχολείου του παιδιού σας.

Hindi / हिन्दी

यदि आपको इन सामग्री का अनुवाद चाहिए, तो कृपया अपने बच्चे की स्कूल की मुख्य कार्यालय से संपर्क करें।

Italian / italiano

Se avete bisogno di questi materiali tradotti, si prega di contattare la sede della scuola di vostro figlio.

Japanese / 日本語

これらの資料を翻訳する必要がある場合は、お子様の学校の本店にお問い合わせください。

Korean / 한국어

이러한 자료가 번역되어 필요하다면 자녀 학교의 본사에 연락하십시오.

Polish / Polskie

Jeśli potrzebujesz tych materiałów przetłumaczone, skontaktuj się z głównym biurem w szkole Twojego dziecka.

Portuguese / português

Se você precisar traduzir esses materiais, entre em contato com o escritório principal da escola de seu filho.

Russian / русский

Если вам нужны эти материалы переведены, пожалуйста, обращайтесь в главный офис школы вашего ребенка.

Spanish / Español

Si necesita traducir estos materiales, comuníquese con la oficina principal de la escuela de su hijo.

HOUGHTON MISSION STATEMENT

Houghton Elementary is a child-centered school. Our commitment is to provide challenging and creative learning experiences that enable children to build both a strong academic and social foundation. Our school offers a safe, supportive environment where children care to learn and learn to care.

School office hours during regular school days are from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Telephone numbers are:

School Office 978-422-2333 Health Office 978-422-2303

FAX 978-422-2301 Absence/Late 978-422-6771 PRESS 1 Houghton

Office Staff: Tina Boss, Principal Kerrie Flynn, Assistant Principal Lauren Marien, Assistant Principal
Tammy Keyes: Administrative Secretary
Bertha Josiah-Ogbomo, Nurse

Houghton Website: <https://houghton.wrsd.net/>

AA Transportation Co., Inc. 774-234-0678 Special Education Transportation, Village Transportation 978-422-6808
Emergency Line: 978-870-6655. Please call for all bussing related information and/or concerns.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Note: Religious holidays are identified on the calendar when they fall on school days which may affect scheduled standardized testing (WRSD Policy #3240).

SCHOOL HOURS AND TRANSPORTATION

Grades K-4

9:05 am – 9:10 am Arrival times of children

9:15 am - 3:45 pm **Official school hours 9:15 am-3:45pm**

12:45 pm Dismissal on all early release days

Early Dismissal

Should an emergency develop during the school day, children might be sent home earlier than usual.

This decision will be announced by the area radio and television stations and School Messenger. If possible, school lunch will be served prior to dismissal.

No School, Delayed Openings, Early Dismissals Announcements

The Wachusett Regional School District has the ability to contact families of all students using the capabilities of School Messenger. In the event school is canceled because of weather conditions, a telephone call to parents will be activated at 5:30 AM. Space was provided on student information forms for parents to request NOT to be called regarding school cancellations.

In the event of school closings or delayed openings, announcements will be made on the following media:

Channel 4 WBZ

AM 1280 – WEIM

FM 96.1 - WSRS

Channel 5 – WCVB

AM580 - WTAG

FM 104.5 -

WXLO

Channel 7 – WHDH
Channel 56 – WLVI
Fox 25 - WFXT

AM 830 - WCRN
AM 1280 - WEIM
AM1319 - WORC

School closings or delayed openings will also be posted on the District website, [w www.wrsd.net](http://www.wrsd.net).

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ATTENDANCE

Absences and Tardiness

Parents/guardians are asked to call the special school number, 978-422-6771 PRESS 1, if their child will be absent or late. There is a telephone answering service to record your child's reported absence at that number from 4:30 p.m. on the previous day to 8:30 am on the day of the absence.

If your child will be late, please call the same number and indicate that he/she will be late, not absent.

Absences not verified by a parent will be checked each day either by a call to the home or the place of employment of the parent/guardian. Calls by children will not be accepted.

When absent, children are responsible for making up the work they have missed within a reasonable time frame as determined by their teacher and for seeking extra help if they feel they need it. The school has the right to request that children who are absent more than 10 days in a marking period bring a doctor's note for each subsequent absence.

Children who are tardy must be brought to the office by a parent/guardian to be signed in before the child goes to their classroom.

Foreseen Absences

Foreseen absences, e.g., family vacations during the school year, place a burden on the child, the teacher, and other children. For this reason, they should be planned to coincide with regularly scheduled vacation times.

We do recognize, however, that there may be circumstances that make it necessary for you to take your child out of school. In such cases, parents/guardians will submit a note to the child's teacher stating the date(s) of the absence and the reason for the absence.

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES WRSDC P6312 REGULAR ATTENDANCE

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

If the school does not receive a message from the parent/guardian by the designated time established by the school, then the school shall call to inquire about the student's absence. Parents will be contacted within three (3) days of the student's absence if the Parent(s) or Guardian has not contacted the school regarding the absence.

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

Legal Refs: Chapter 222 of the Acts of 2012, Chapter 76. Section I B First Reading: 09/12/91 Second Reading: 09/26/94
Amendment First Read: 11/10/14 Amendment Second Read: 11/24/14 WRSDC Policy 6312

Student Absence Notification Program

At the commencement of each school year, parents/guardians will be sent a notice instructing them to call a designated telephone number at a designated time to inform the school of the student's absence and the reason for such absence.

The notice will also require such parent or guardian to furnish the school with a home, work, or other emergency telephone number where they can be contacted during the school day. If the school does not receive a message from the parent/guardian by the designated time, then the school shall call the telephone number or numbers furnished to inquire about the student's absence. Parents will be contacted within three (3) days of the student's absence if the Parent(s) or Guardian has not contacted the school regarding the absence

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

Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact school staff and work collaboratively with them to correct the reasons that the student is missing school.

Excused Absence/Tardy includes:

- Documented illness or injury
- Bereavement/family funeral
- Major religious observances
- Court
- Extraordinary family circumstances (excused at the discretion of the Principal)

An Unexcused Absence/Tardy is not covered by the aforementioned definition. Examples of an unexcused absence may include, but may not be limited to:

- Any illness over three consecutive days not documented by a physician or medical professional
- Truancy
- Family vacations
- Undocumented absences
- Non-emergency family situation

Family Vacations

Parents and students are reminded that Massachusetts Law requires compulsory attendance for students. We strongly discourage family vacations when school is in session. In addition to compromising the attendance law, family vacations interrupt the educational process of each course in ways that makeup work cannot reverse. Teachers are not required to give out homework assignments prior to a family vacation.

Attendance Policy

A meeting will be scheduled with the building Principal (or his/her designee), the Parent(s)/Guardian and the student to develop an action plan to improve the student's attendance if a student has accrued any of the following:

- Five (5) or more unexcused absences in the school year
- Five (5) or more days tardy (unexcused)

Chronic absenteeism may lead to academic failure for the year and possible grade retention.

Make-Up Work

If a student is absent for a prolonged period of time, he/she will be given an appropriate amount of time to make up the missed work. Parents may request and pick-up work from the office on the **third consecutive day** of a child's absence. Homework requests must be made when calling the sick line, 978-422-6771 Press 1, and requests need to be made prior to 8:30 A.M.

Teachers do not provide school work for children whose families take vacations when school is in session.

Unless other arrangements are made with the teacher, each child will be required to submit these work assignments within one week of his/her return to school. The parent/guardian must also keep in mind that the teacher cannot be held responsible for providing the child with individual instruction on all the material covered during the absence.

In-District Transfers

Parents/guardians of student residents within the Wachusett Regional School District who wish to have their child attend a school other than the one assigned by the District, may request another school through a written request to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services. If approved the parent/guardian must assume any transportation burden unless required by law or when a unique circumstance exists as determined by the Superintendent.

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Dismissals

Early dismissal of children can be arranged through the office. Please see that your child brings a note stating: (1) the reason for dismissal, (2) the time he or she is to be dismissed, and (3) who will pick up the child. No child will be dismissed in the custody of a person other than the parent of the child unless a note has been sent from the parent. Please do not call for early dismissal except in the case of an emergency.

Children will be dismissed to the office from class at the requested time but will not be allowed to leave the building unless accompanied by the designated adult.

Children will not be allowed to go home with another child without a note from the parent. In addition, no child is allowed to change buses to go home with another child. However, if a child is riding his regular bus home and getting off at a different stop, the parent/guardian must send in a note specifying where their child will be getting off. The note will be turned into the teacher and the office will issue a Bus Permission Slip for the child to give the bus driver. Children without a note will return home in accordance with their regular routine.

Parents who pick their children up on a regular basis at the end of school dismissal (ie: Tuesday and Thursday each week) are requested to submit a note each week. Parents who pick up children on occasion at the end of school dismissal (ie: doctor appointment) are requested to submit a note on the day of pickup. Notes must contain the name of the person who is picking up the child. We require any non-parents who occasionally pick up children at the end of the school day, even when a note is provided, to pick up children in the office. This includes older siblings, other relatives and neighbors. We will only release a child to the person(s) identified in the written note. These practices are in place to help ensure that children and parents get to their appropriate designations in a safe and timely fashion.

Child Transportation

WRSD Policy P6562

ALTERNATE STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

It shall be expected that bus students will go to and from school by the same means on a daily basis. A parent 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.

K-4 students will be required to present a 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.

Child Drop-Off by Parent/Guardian:

Supervision of children by staff begins at 9:05 am. Children must not be left off at school prior to that time. Children are to be dropped off curbside next to the side parking lot. **Please note:** The driveway in front of the school is for buses.

School Bus Transportation:

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.

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 endanger the health, safety, and welfare of other riders or damage properties will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges. Notification of this policy shall be contained in the Student Handbook.

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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 contracted by the Wachusett Regional School District 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.

Your child's safety is of utmost importance to us. To ensure the safest possible ride, the transportation company and the school ask that your child know and adhere to the following school bus practices:

- (1) The driver is in full charge of the bus; children must remain seated at all times unless disembarking from the bus.
- (2) Children must not stand in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- (3) Children may be assigned specific seats on the bus.
- (4) Children may not extend arms or heads out of the windows at any time.
- (5) Any damage done to the bus by a child must be paid for by his/her parents/guardians.
- (6) Conversation on the bus must not be loud or boisterous.
- (7) All children should treat peers with courtesy.
- (8) If a child must cross a roadway, he/she must do so in front of the bus after the driver has signaled that it is safe.
- (9) Children should not throw objects or litter on the bus or out of the bus.
- (10) Children are not allowed to bring animals on the bus.

If a child is found to be guilty of continuous misconduct or a serious act of misconduct, riding privileges may be denied. In such an event, the parent/guardian is responsible for transporting the child to and from school. Notification to the parent/guardian will be by an administrator and will not be put into effect until parents have been so notified (see WRSD policy #P7340)

Procedures for reporting passenger misconduct

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 will **speak with the bus driver**.

1. A School Bus Conduct Report will be completed and submitted to the school Administration and the bus company.
2. The Principal or designee and the bus company will retain copies of the signed report.

School Lunch Program:

There will be NO costs to parents for school lunches this school year 2024-2025

Children purchasing lunch may utilize the myschoolbucks.com link at www.wrsd.net which allows for prepayment of lunches. If you choose not to take advantage of the online prepayment service you may continue to make advance

payments via check, which should be made payable to the Wachusett Regional Cafeteria – Sterling.
NOT APPLICABLE FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR

Even if you are not interested in the prepay option, set up the account and you will have the ability to view transactions and balances. The system will also give you a low balance alert. **NOT APPLICABLE FOR 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR**

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School Snacks:

Time for children to have snacks is allocated during the school day. Snacks are provided by parents/guardians.

Kindergarten Entrance Requirements

A child must be five years of age by August 31st to enter kindergarten. Registration (starts in January) Parent/guardian orientation is held in May. Kindergarten screening is held in June. Parents may pick up the registration packet at Houghton School or download it from www.wrsd.net. When submitting the registration packet to the school, the parent/guardian must bring a notarized birth certificate, a record of immunizations, recent physical and completed registration forms. Please drop off your registration forms at Houghton School.

Kindergarten Screening will be conducted in mid to late June. Children will be screened for gross and fine motor development, speech and language development and general concept development. All screening results will be shared with the parent/guardian in the fall.

WRSDC Policy P6400

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES

P6121A, P6121B, P6121C - Student Residency Policy

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES STUDENT RESIDENCY POLICY The Wachusett Regional School District Committee adopts the following policy regarding the residency and enrollment of students. I. RESIDENCY (Legal Reference: M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 5)

In order to attend a school within the Wachusett Regional School District, a student must actually reside in Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, or Sterling, unless the exception (set forth in Part V below) applies. Residence, for purposes of this policy shall be defined as: The place where the student lives permanently. The permanent residence of a minor child is ordinarily presumed to be the legal residence of the child's parent or legal guardian having physical custody of the child. In determining residency, Wachusett Regional School District (WRSD) retains the right to require the production of a variety of records and documentation and to investigate where a student actually resides.

A determination that a student does not actually reside in Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, or Sterling renders the student ineligible to enroll in the WRSD or, if the student is already enrolled in the WRSD, shall result, subject only to Section V. B below, in the immediate termination of such enrollment. A parent, legal guardian, or student who has reached the age of majority (18), who is aggrieved by a determination of residency, may appeal the determination to the Superintendent of Schools, whose decision shall be final.

II. VERIFICATION OF RESIDENCY Before any child is enrolled in the Wachusett Regional School District, his/her parent or legal guardian must provide the following required proofs of primary residency as part of the registration process. Applications cannot be processed without these documents. One document is required from column A, B, and C.

Column A (must provide one) Evidence of Residency

- Record of recent mortgage payment and/or property tax bill
- Copy of lease and record of recent rental payment
- Landlord Affidavit and recent rental payment
- Section 8 Agreement
- FOR ALL NEW CONSTRUCTION - Must provide a certificate of occupancy

Column B (must provide one) Evidence of Occupancy

- Recent bill dated within the past 60 days showing address with WRSD
- Gas Bill
- Oil Bill

- Electric Bill
- Home telephone bill (not cell phone)
- Cable Bill
- Excise Tax bill

Column C (must provide one) Evidence of Identification

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- Valid Driver's license
- Valid MA photo ID card
- Valid Passport
- (photo ID for all above)

III. **ENFORCEMENT:** Should a question arise concerning any student's residency elsewhere while attending the WRSD, the student's residency will be subject to further inquiry and/or investigation. Such questions concerning residency may arise on the basis of, but are not limited to, incomplete, suspicious, or contradictory proofs of address; anonymous tips; correspondence that is returned to the WRSD because of an invalid or unknown address, or other grounds. The District may request additional documentation and may obtain the services of police, town departments and/or investigative agency personnel to conduct investigations into student residence. The Superintendent of Schools shall make the final determination of residency. Upon determination by the Superintendent of Schools that a student is actually residing in a city or town other than Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland or Sterling, the student's enrollment in WRSD shall be terminated immediately.

IV. **PENALTIES:** In addition to termination of enrollment and the imposition of other penalties permitted by law (M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 5), the WRSD reserves the right to recover restitution based upon the costs of educational services provided during the period of non-residency. The WRSD also reserves the right to pursue civil and/or criminal legal action(s).

V. **EXCEPTIONS:** to the residency requirements shall not apply to the following:

A. Students who are entitled to attend the WRSD under the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

B. Per WRSDC Policy 4240 Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Tuition, "...students in grades 8 and 12, who began the school year and have moved out of the District following the October 1 Enrollment report" may continue attending the WRSD school for the grade 8 or grade 12 year.

C. Students whose parents divorce or separate and share physical custody, provided one custodial parent remains a resident of Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland or Sterling and the student resides at least 50% of the time with the parent who resides in the Wachusett district. (Legal documentation must be provided to the school office.)

D. Under unusual circumstances, families may appeal the decision to the Superintendent of Schools, who may consider the student's educational history and educational continuity. The Superintendent's decision will be final.

VI. NOTIFICATION

The WRSD residency requirements, verification procedures, and consequences of falsifying or misrepresenting residency will be published in the WRSD's Policy Manual, and published in each school handbook.

First Reading: 08/21/17

Second Reading: 09/11/17

WRSDC Policy 6121

HOME –SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

WRSD Policy Relating to Pupil Services Policy 6260

Assignment of Students to Classes

The Wachusett District School Committee supports an academic environment that promotes student success as a primary focus. The classroom shall provide an academic culture so that a student has the opportunity to achieve his/her highest potential.

The Wachusett Regional School District shall make every effort to ensure that the composition of classes is balanced to maximize instructional opportunities and meet individual student needs. Considerations may include the following: gender, achievement levels, equitable distribution of ability groups to reflect an inclusive school, class size, special education needs, students' social and emotional needs, learning styles, level of independence, student behavioral issues, and interaction abilities. The District's goal is to establish classes that will enhance the dynamics of the classroom by bringing students together who will work as a learning team, and challenge and complement one another.

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The Wachusett Regional School District shall support appreciation for diversity and shall promote among students respect, tolerance, and understanding for others. The classroom provides students an opportunity to engage with one another and to develop responsible social behaviors necessary for an educated citizenry.

Parents may give input to the building administrator regarding the placement of their children. Such input should be submitted by a specified date. While the Administration provides an opportunity for parental input in the decision affecting a student's assignment to a class or course, the Principal shall make the final assignment decision to a class or course in keeping with the above stated District goals. Parental requests for specific teachers, however, shall not be considered in the decision-making process.

Parents/guardians and teachers are encouraged to communicate with each other at any time they may have questions concerning their child at a mutually convenient time.

Student Transfer

Please inform the Houghton School office if you are moving and advise the school of the last day your child will attend school. The school will also need your new address and the name and address of the new school your child will be attending.

Certain release forms must be signed by the parent (usually upon enrollment at new school) for records to be forwarded to the new school. A transfer form might be required for the new school. A child's records will be sent to the new school upon request and will not be given to parents for transit to the new school.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

A parent/guardian may request a teacher conference at any time of the school year. Please contact the teacher(s) to arrange for a conference. Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled for all our grades in place of a one report card.

Report Cards

Report cards will be issued for Kindergarten, Grade 1 & Grade 2 three times per year. The first quarter report card is a Parent-Teacher conference. Report cards will be issued four times during the school year for grades 3 and 4. Report card formats vary at different grade levels.

Before or After School Help

Children wishing to remain after school for additional help must make arrangements with the teacher(s) at least one day in advance. The parent must provide the school with written permission for the child to stay and assumes the responsibility for providing the child with transportation home.

WRSDC Policy P6616

HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

Emergency Information Cards

The school maintains a file of emergency information cards should a parent need to be contacted during the school day. It is essential that this information be kept up to date. Please contact the school in the case of any change

Health Services

Students who become ill or injured will be directed to the school nurse(s) 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.

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 physical must have a physical examination within the 1st year. A physical exam is also required prior to tryouts for competitive athletics or cheerleading.

Mandated Screening Programs

Students in grades 1, 4, 7 & 10 have BMI checked and students in grades K - 12 are tested for vision and hearing. Students in grades 5-8 and 9 receive an annual postural screening for scoliosis. The screening is done by the school nurse with assistance from the P. E. staff. Parents will be notified if screening procedures identify possible problems.

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.

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.

Medication Administration

Medication, prescription and non-prescription, must be by written order of the provider with written permission from the parent/guardian before medication may be administered by the nurse. Medication must be brought to the school by the parent/guardian or other designated responsible adult in the original container with the label intact. Students are not to transport medication to and from school. 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. R5/28/03

Exclusion from School Activities for Health Reasons

All children are expected to participate in all school-related activities. Temporary exclusion will be allowed upon written request from the parent/guardian. Permanent exclusion requires written notification from a physician.

Fire, Evacuation, Weather, Shelter in Place Drills

Fire, Evacuation, and Weather drills are conducted as required by state regulations to ensure the safety of all persons in the event of an emergency. Children are instructed in, and must comply with, the procedures established for safe evacuation of and return to the school building. Members of the Sterling Fire Department are in attendance to observe school procedures and make recommendations if warranted. Shelter in place drills follow ALICE protocols. All shelter in place drills are conducted with members of the Sterling Police Department on school grounds to observe and make recommendations if warranted.

HOMEWORK

Homework can fulfill both an academic and life skill purpose by:

- * Reinforcing classroom learning
- * Promoting individual responsibility, initiative, and motivation

- * Teaching organizational skills and time management

Focus areas for homework assignments:

Literacy: (phonics, sight words, fluency, comprehension, written language)

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Reading or any of its components may be assigned as homework. The benefits of reading cannot be overstated. Independent reading by a child or being read to at home are activities that are encouraged by Houghton School staff. These promote an enjoyment of reading, increase vocabulary development, improve comprehension and numerous other reading skills.

Math: (number sense, basic concepts, math facts)

Science and Social Studies: Unit topics vary by grade. Both subjects may incorporate both reading and writing. Unit projects can be over a period of one to four weeks and may warrant parental assistance.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten teachers may assign home activities to reinforce or enrich learning. Kindergarten parents are encouraged to read to their children from childhood classics and/or from books suggested by the classroom teacher.

Children in Grades 1-4

Homework may be assigned that follows the Houghton School's "Rule of Ten."

Listed below are the time guidelines teachers will follow for nightly homework assignments:

Grade One	10 minutes
Grade Two	20 minutes
Grade Three & Four	30 minutes

Time estimates for assignments are made by the teacher with the understanding that assignments may take more or less time for individual children. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher if they observe their child consistently experiencing difficulty completing assignments within grade guidelines. Frequency of homework assignments are determined by the teacher. There will be no assignments on weekends, snow days, or school vacations.

Wachusett Regional School District Policy Relating to Education WRSDC 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.

Field Trips

The school promotes enrichment programs that take place on site. However, there may be an occasion where a field trip is planned by a grade. These trips are planned in conjunction with an area of study and are usually bus trips. A description of the details of the trip will be sent home by the teacher(s). Permission slips are sent home and must be

completed and signed by the parent/guardian for a child to be able to participate.

Some or all of the costs associated with the trip may be the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Should this pose an economic hardship, the parent/guardian is urged to discuss the matter with the child's teacher.

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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 handicapped within the meaning of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Further information may be obtained from **the** school Principal, Designee, or the District's Section 504 Coordinator.

Special Education

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 Services, Wachusett Regional School District, Jefferson School, 1745 Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522 (508-829-1670 x237).

Special Needs Resource Program

The special education program provides supportive services for children who need individual and or small group instruction in order to make effective progress in the regular education program. In some cases, the services may take place in a regular classroom setting and in compliance with Chapter 766 regulations. Under no circumstances will a child be placed in a program involving scheduled periods of special education services without parental written consent.

Along with specially designed instruction, the special education teachers are responsible for evaluations of children suspected of having special education needs. If warranted, an individualized educational program (IEP) is developed and implemented following signed approval by the parent/guardian.

Home Tutoring

Home tutoring is available for extended absences due to illness and/or injury. Arrangements can be made for this service by contacting the WRSD Administrator of Special Education (508) 829-1670.

Preschool Screening

A parent/guardian may request screening for their preschool child (age 3+) if they suspect that there is the possibility of a learning difficulty. Services can be obtained by contacting the Administrator of Special Education at the District Office. (508) 829-1670.

Technology & Social Media

USE OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC PLAYERS, ELECTRONIC GAMES, ETC.

Personal electronic devices including, but not limited to: cell phones, smart watches, stereos/radios,,IPODS, hand-held and alike are **not** permitted in school nor on the school bus . Such devices can disrupt the educational process. Exceptions may occur when the devices in question are used for classroom activities and/or when **Administrative** approval is obtained. Any electronic devices confiscated are given to the Principal for safe-keeping. **Laser pointers are NOT allowed** in school and will be confiscated. Such pointers can be used inappropriately and can lead to personal injury. Use of laser pointers will be considered a violation of the District's weapons policy

Acceptable Computer Use Regulations for WRSD Students

The purpose of the WRSD network and the internet is to enhance educational research. Use of these media is limited to educational purposes determined by the district. Access to the internet enables children to explore thousands of libraries, databases and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with internet users throughout the world. Families should be warned that some material accessible via the internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate and/or potentially offensive to some people.

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While the district's intent is to make internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, children may find ways to access other materials as well. It is the district's position that the benefits to children in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed the potential disadvantages

WRSDC Policy P6531.1A

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES SOCIAL MEDIA

Section I: Introduction

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

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

Section II: Goals of the Policy

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee permits the use of social media platforms that support instructional opportunities and the social/emotional development of students. The District promotes educational uses of technology, including social media tools, along with appropriate training for students and staff on safety, proper use, and management of innovative learning tools.

Social media platforms will be used in District schools to achieve the following goals: Educate students, staff, and parents/guardians about the concerns and benefits of social media

Access social media during and beyond the school day for educational purposes, social/emotional and other school acceptable uses. Explore ways to integrate social media with classroom teaching and learning

Integrate student publication with authentic social media environments

Encourage the use of technology-based interventions to support student learning

Allow for ongoing interaction between students and teachers for appropriate school-related use

Promote student interaction with peers, outside organizations, and professionals in a global community

Offer and encourage student use of online resources to communicate and seek support for bullying and safety concerns

Encourage parent/guardian interaction with teachers & schools through the use of digital communications and other media environments.

WRSDC Policy P6531.1B

Section III: Guidelines for Use of Social Media Platforms

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

- All use of social media tools must comply with District acceptable use policies
- All staff & student online communication is subject to state & federal laws, such as the Family Educational Rights Act (FERPA), and District policies governing communication
- All staff and student online communication is subject to policies ensuring safe environments for students and staff free from bullying, harassment, and other forms of unwanted communication that threaten well-being and productivity
- Staff and District administration are encouraged to collaborate in developing social media tools
- Staff social media accounts used to communicate with current WRSD students will be established using District email accounts and will remain separate from any personal staff social media accounts.

Educational social media accounts maintained by staff members shall not contain personal information

District staff shall not subscribe to students' personal postings in social media platforms not controlled or monitored by the District

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Photographs of Children

Children's photographs are scheduled annually to be taken in the fall (see calendar for this year's dates). Photographs are taken of all children at all grade levels; however, parents/guardians are not required to purchase the photographs. A portion of the cost of the photographs purchased is donated back to the school to help support school related activities such as the library and classroom enrichment. A parent may choose not to have their child photographed. However, this request must be in writing to the Principal prior to picture day.

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.

Please Note: Children will be asked to remove hats upon entering the school building.

Lost and Found

Most found articles (clothing, lunch boxes, etc.) are placed on a table in the before/after school pick up and drop off area. Valuables such as watches and money are kept in the administration office. Any found items not claimed by the end of a school quarter will be donated to local charities. Parents are urged not to have children bring large amounts of money to school and not to leave any monies or valuables in their outerwear or desks.

Care of School Property

A parent/guardian of a child will be required to cover the cost of any item (book, equipment, supplies, etc.) **furnished to the child** by the school which will need to be replaced due to its loss or damage. This requirement shall also apply to any school property vandalized by a child.

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Use of School Facilities

The facilities of the Houghton Elementary School are available for use by community and outside organizations so long as the activities do not interfere with the school program and the proposed activity is in compliance with the policy on the use of the building. A copy of the policy and registration forms for the use of the building may be obtained at the office of the Principal. The school Principal has the final decision on building usage.

SCHOOL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

School Volunteer Program/PTO

The school volunteer program consists of parents/guardians and other community members who are interested in giving of their time and talent to students and teachers. If you have an interest in this program, please contact Houghton's PTO coordinator of volunteers or the parent/teacher group's representative. Monthly meetings are open to parents and all parents are eligible to vote on issues at the monthly meetings.

School Improvement and Modernization Council (SIMCO)

SIMCO is an advisory council to the Principal and functions in compliance with the regulations established by the Massachusetts Department of Education relative to the Education Reform Act. SIMCO membership consists of parents, teachers and other interested Sterling citizens.

In its advisory capacity, SIMCO establishes subcommittees which work with the Principal and the faculty to investigate ways in which the school program might be improved. If you have an interest in this group, please contact the Principal for more information. Monthly meetings are open to parents.

WRSDC Policy 6400

BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

The following information on bullying prevention and intervention (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O) serves as an amendment to our student handbook

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Wachusett Regional School District fosters and maintains educational environments that are free from bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. No student in the Wachusett Regional School District shall be permitted to bully another student through conduct or communication or to retaliate against any individual for reporting bullying or cooperating with an investigation of bullying. A student who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation will be subject to a range of disciplinary sanctions including, but not limited to, reprimand, detention, suspension, expulsion, or other sanctions as determined by the school administration. Except where bullying has resulted in the student's permanent expulsion, students who engage in bullying may also be required to participate in instructional activities designed to develop the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying behavior(s).

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

A. Definitions

Bullying: Bullying is unfair and one-sided. Bullying happens when someone keeps hurting, frightening, threatening or leaving someone out of activities on purpose. Bullying can happen at school or away from school. Bullying can happen face to face, behind someone's back, on-line, in a text message, repeated phone calls or a combination of each type.

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Examples of bullying are: hitting or kicking; name calling or threatening or leaving friends out of activities just to hurt their feelings. Bullying that happens outside of school can lead to disciplinary action at school if a target feels unsafe at school or if school is disrupted as a result of the bullying behaviors.

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

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

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

Aggressor/Perpetrator: A student who engaged, either individually, or as part of a group, in bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

Local law enforcement agency: local police department(s)

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

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

B. Policy Jurisdiction

For purposes of this policy, bullying is prohibited:

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

C. Reporting Requirements

Anyone, including a parent or guardian, student, or school staff member, can report bullying or retaliation. Reports can be made in writing or orally to the Principal or another staff member, or reports may be made anonymously. Contact your child's Principal or Director of Student Services, 508-829-1670 ext. 253, if you have questions or concerns.

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School staff members must report immediately to the Principal or his/her designee if they witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation. Staff members include, but are not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessionals.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying, is prohibited.

D. Investigations

Upon receipt of such a report or complaint of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation, the Principal will promptly commence an investigation. If the Principal or a designee determines that bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or retaliation has occurred, the Principal will:

- i. notify the local law enforcement agency if the Principal reasonably believes that criminal charges may be pursued against an aggressor;
- ii. take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action;
- iii. notify the parents of the aggressor of the investigative findings;
- iv. notify the parents of the target of the investigative findings and, as consistent with state and federal law, notify the target's parents of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; and
- (v) take appropriate action to protect the target and witnesses from further bullying or retaliation.

Schools and districts must provide ongoing professional development to increase the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development is to include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying; (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; (v) information on the incidence of nature and internet safe(vi) as they relate to cyber-bullying.

A summary of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall be included in each school's student handbook and shall be posted on individual school and District websites. The Wachusett Regional School District shall also provide all school staff written notice of the Plan

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:

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 annually be reviewed 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, non discriminatory 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 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, **hallucinogens**, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, unregistered drugs, controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, or evidence of cheating or other academic misconduct.

Long & Short Term Student Suspensions

(Threatening harm to students, staff, and or school facilities). 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.

Houghton Elementary School attempts to take a positive approach to the issue of conduct of children. The success of any school depends upon respect. We will attempt to administer consequences, when necessary, with compassion, clarity and firmness, while trying to foster self-discipline and responsibility. All children are expected to be courteous and respect the rights of all individuals.

The following general school rules governing each child's conduct are enforced by all staff in all areas of the school building

and grounds:

- (1) Children are expected to walk in any part of the school (except when required for instruction) or to school buses.
- (2) Disruptive behavior, physical or verbal, is not tolerated.
- (3) Children are expected to treat others and their property with respect. Abusive behavior, physical or verbal, is not tolerated. 17
- (4) Children may not harass and/or disrupt the activities of others. (You will know if you are harassing, annoying or being disruptive when the other person informs you of that fact). (See School District policy #6436).
- (5) Only soft footballs and rubber balls, basketballs, and jump ropes may be brought from home to be used outside of the school during designated times
- (6) Children are expected to use appropriate language at all times.
- (7) Children and adults have the shared responsibility to maintain our beautiful school and its grounds.

Each teacher, who, through his/her own means and methods conforms to the policies established for the school, enforces children's conduct within the classroom. The teachers are the authority within the classroom and exercise this authority to create an effective atmosphere for learning for all children.

The school has the authority to discipline children for inappropriate behavior off-campus at school related functions or any other type of activity reasonably related to school activities.

Tobacco is prohibited and the consequence for such a violation will be suspension from school with the amount of time to be determined by the administration.

Special Education Discipline

All students are expected to meet the standards of behavior as set by the Wachusett community. Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws and I.D.E.A. 1997 require 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 (I.E.P). The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of special needs students:

1. The I.E.P. for every special needs student will indicate if they can meet student management policies or if modifications are needed.
2. The Principal (or his designees) will notify the Special Education Office of any special needs students who have been suspended. The Special Education Administrator 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:
 - a. services will be provided in order to ensure that the student receives FAPE, and
 - b. a functional behavioral assessment will be conducted and a behavioral intervention plan will be implemented, and
 - c. **The Team** will conduct a manifestation determination in order to decide whether the **infraction is 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.

WRSDC Policy P6433

Controlled Substance Policy SUBSTANCE ABUSE

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. Any staff member with knowledge of alcohol or harmful drug use or the carrying of harmful substances shall notify the Principal or the superintendent and the appropriate legal authorities

WRSDC Policy P6435

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES WEAPONS

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

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

1. Any weapon found in a locker or other storage space which is assigned to a student and which has a lock or other security device may be considered to be the property of the student assigned to the locker or other storage space for the purpose of disciplinary action under the Student Discipline Code. Any student found to be in possession of a weapon on school premises or at a school-sponsored event may be subject to expulsion from school by the Principal.

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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.

WRSDC Policy P6434A

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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

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

DEFINITION

The legal definition of sexual harassment is:

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

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

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

- Touching (arm, breast, buttocks, shoulders, etc.)
- Verbal comments (about parts of the body, what type of sex the victim would "be good at," clothing, looks, etc.)
- Name calling (from "honey" to "bitch" and worse)
- Starting and repeating sexual rumors
- Leers and stares
- Sexual or "dirty" jokes
- Cartoons, pictures, and pornography
- Using the computer to leave sexual messages or graffiti, or to play sexually offensive computer games

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

A. Depending upon the severity of the harassment, these steps will be taken for the first act of harassment:

The child who has been allegedly harassed will give a written and verbal reporting of the incident to the building Principal or Assistant Principal.

The child accused of the act of harassment will be verbally informed of the report of the incident and asked to give his/her verbal account of the incident. A written report of his/her account will also be kept. The child who was allegedly harassed may be present during this interview, as appropriate or desired by the school administration.

Parents of the child accused of harassment will be notified by phone and/or mail. At the discretion of the school administration, professional personnel working with this child may also be notified of the incident and its consequences verbally and/or in writing.

B. If a child is accused of repeated acts of harassment or the severity of the harassment is deemed by the school administration as extreme, resulting in more than 10 days suspension or in expulsion, the following due process procedure will be implemented:

A written notice to the child accused of harassment of the opportunity for a hearing.

A written notice of the charges to include telephone notification to the child's parent/guardian and a written copy of the charges mailed to the child's parent/guardian.

The right to be represented by a lawyer or advocate and adequate time to prepare for a hearing.

Access to documented evidence and opportunity to present witnesses and evidence on the child's behalf.

The right to question witnesses.

A written decision including the specific grounds for the decision.

In addition, any child expelled from school by the Principal shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent of Schools.

Complaint Procedure:

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

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

teacher, Principal, Assistant Principal, Superintendent, etc.). You can also speak to your parents who can then notify the superintendent, Principal or Assistant Principal. Remember that the complaint procedure does not start until school/District personnel receive the complaint.

2. Within two school days of receipt of the verbal complaint, the employee will notify the Principal/Superintendent, and your parent/guardian will be notified of the pending complaint.
3. If you have not or do not want to put the complaint in writing, the employee will do so. This should be done no later than two (2) school days after you have talked, or given the note, to the employee. The complaint has to be put in writing to make sure that the employee fully and correctly understands the issue(s). A copy of the 20

complaint, in writing, will be reviewed with you and your parent/guardian to ensure accuracy, before it is share with the subject of the complaint.

4. The employee will refer the written complaint to the Principal/Superintendent. The Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee may speak with you to get more information. In any case, the Principal/ Superintendent or his/her designee will speak to the person who is alleged to have sexually harassed you (called the "respondent") to obtain information as well.
 - a. If the Principal/Superintendent feels that the complaint can be resolved without a formal investigation, he/she may use the informal procedure.¹ The informal procedure simply attempts to resolve the situation and can be done in many ways. Examples are:

The PrincipalSuperintendent 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.

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

- The Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee may have you write a letter to the respondent saying that the behavior bothers you and must stop.
- The Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee may have separate conversations with you and the respondent.

Examples of possible resolutions are as follows:

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

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

Formal Procedure:

1. The formal procedure is used when any one of the following occurs:
 - a. You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent ask that the formal procedure be used;
 - b. The Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee decides that the formal procedure should be used;or
 - c. You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent feels that the informal procedure was not helpful or adequate and one of the parties **requested**, within five (5) school days, that the formal procedure be used:

2. The formal procedure will be completed within twenty (20) school days of the complaint being filed with the Principal/Superintendent, or if the informal procedure was used, within twenty (20) school days of the request to start the formal procedure.

3. The Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee shall investigate the complaint and complete a written report, which will include:

- All facts and circumstances of the incident;
- A summary of the investigation, which will include interviews with anyone reasonably believed to have relevant information, namely, the individual filing the complaint, the 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.

**POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES
SEXUAL HARASSMENT (continued)**

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 as occurred, then he/she may discipline the respondent, require the respondent to apologize to the complainant, suggest that the respondent go to counseling, or require the respondent to attend training, refer the matter for review by state or local law enforcement authorities, or any combination of the above.

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

Other Resources:

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

Retaliation:

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

Considerations To Remember:

- A. A man/boy, as well as a woman/girl, may be the victim of sexual harassment, and a woman/girl, as well as a man/boy, may be the harasser.
- B. The victim may be the same or opposite sex as the harasser.
- C. The victim does not have to be the person at whom the unwelcome sexual conduct is directed. The victim may also be someone who is affected by such conduct when it is directed toward another person.

For example, inappropriate attempts at humor or the sexual harassment of one girl (or boy) may create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for another girl (or boy) or may unreasonably interfere with an individual's educational performance.

STUDENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Houghton Elementary School is a school with a long tradition of excellence. We are proud of our curriculum instruction and support services. Our school environment can only remain strong if we maintain order and proper decorum in our building. All members of the Houghton Elementary School community are expected to treat themselves and others with respect. Houghton Elementary School has clear behavioral expectations for our students; there are consequences for those who choose to disobey our rules. We focus on Responsive Classroom practices and our school values: Kindness, Honesty, Respect, Cooperation, and Responsibility.

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DISCIPLINARY DUE PROCESS

SHORT TERM DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS:

A student will be given oral notice of the offense with which he/she is charged and an opportunity to respond prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in the student's suspension from school for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. In the event that the Principal determines that the student will be suspended from school, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone and in writing.

LONG TERM DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS:

Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in a student's suspension for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expulsion, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given written notice of a hearing at which they may be represented by an attorney at their expense and may examine and present witnesses and documentary evidence. Following this hearing, the decision maker (Principal/School Committee) will issue a written decision. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will have the right to appeal any decision imposing a long-term exclusion from school. Where the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71 §37H, the student shall have ten (10) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent of Schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §37H1/2, the student shall have five (5) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent. For exclusions imposed by the School Committee in accordance with M.G.L. c.76 §17, the student shall have the right to file a written request for reconsideration by the Committee within ten (10) days of the effective date of the exclusion. Pending the outcome of any such appeal, the disciplinary sanction imposed shall remain in effect. M.G.L. c. 76 §17, M.G.L. c. 71 §37H, M.G.L. c. 71 §37H1/2

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students who have been identified as students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or who the school has reason to believe might be eligible for special education services are entitled to additional procedural protections when a disciplinary exclusion is considered. In many cases, a student with a disability will be entitled to services identified by the student's Team as necessary to provide the student with a free appropriate public education during periods of disciplinary exclusion exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. For additional information regarding the rights of students with disabilities in the context of school discipline, please contact the Principal or the Administrator of Special Education.

Appeals You are also provided with an avenue of appeal in cases where you feel student management policies were not justly applied. A student charged by a teacher with an offense may appeal the decision to their administrator. The final level of appeal is the Principal except as specified above.

Consequences for Violations of Rules - When school rules are violated, the following may be implemented.

Academic Penalty - For every class that meets daily that a student cuts or misses because they are truant, two points will be deducted from the student's term average. For every class that meets every other day that a student cuts or misses because they are truant, four points will be deducted from the student's term average.

School Service - Students who violate school policies may be assigned to perform school service in place of other penalties. Such service may include projects that assist in the operation of the school community.

Out-of-School Suspension -

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. For the duration of an out-of-school suspension, students may not visit the campus or attend any

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school-related events. At the conclusion of an out-of-school suspension, a student's parent(s) or guardian must have a discussion with the student's administrator and reach agreement on conditions for the student's readmission to the Wachusett school community.

Juvenile Courts - The administration will use the court system to work with students who are habitual school offenders or with students who have excessive absences from school.

Behavioral Contracts - In order to address inappropriate behaviors on the part of individual students, some students and their parents will be required to sign contracts outlining specific behaviors expected of students and the consequences that will follow if these behavioral expectations are not met before the student may continue at Houghton.

Exclusion/Expulsion - Exclusion/expulsion will be used as a disciplinary measure in extreme and chronic behavioral situations. This may include situations such as possession/use of weapons; assault; possession, sale or use of an illegal substance; or other serious offenses.

Conduct which endangers persons or property or is seriously disruptive to the educational process. Included within such prohibited conduct are the following acts:

- a. Conduct causing a threat of danger to the physical well being of self or of other individuals.
- b. Physical assault on another which is not necessary for self-defense.
- c. Taking, or attempting to take, personal property of others.
- d. Willfully causing, attempting to cause, or threatening to cause damage to the property of others and/or the school.
- e. Possession and/or use of any kind of weapon whether on school premises or at any school-related event. For the purpose of this policy, weapons include, but are not limited to firearms, knives, or any other device or object that can be used to inflict or to threaten bodily harm (WRSD policy #6435).
- f. Participation in, or intentional incitement of, activities which results in an unauthorized occupancy by children, or others, of any part of the school premises and failure to leave promptly such premises having been directed to by the Principal or designee; or, intentional incitement to participate in any form of disruptive demonstration.
- g. Open defiance of the authority of any administrator, teacher or persons having authority over the child, including verbal abuse.
- h. Repeated unauthorized absences from school.

- i. Intentional and/or successful incitement of truancy of other students.
- j. Fighting.
- k. Using, possessing and selling tobacco, alcohol or any controlled substances.
- l. Knowingly using or copying the work of others and presenting it as their own without proper attribution.
- m. Falsification of school records.
- n. Verbal abuse and/or harassment of other individuals.
- o. Other misconduct as determined by the school committee.

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES TOLERANCE

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. Reference to this policy will be placed in all student handbooks.

WRSDC Policy P6437

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES

PROMOTING CIVIL RIGHTS AND PROHIBITING HARASSMENT, BULLYING, DISCRIMINATION AND HATE CRIMES

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

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

Harassment

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

Student and Staff Responsibilities

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

Reporting Harassment, Discrimination or Hate Crimes

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

of violations of this policy.

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

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

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

Reporting Other Incidences

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

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

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

Protection Against Retaliation

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

Ensuring Safety During Investigation

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

Determination of Proceedings

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

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

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

- the allegation is serious enough that it appears to place the complainant or any other person at physical risk;
- the incident has resulted in a criminal charge;
- the incident involves a referral to the Department of Children and Families (DCF);
- the allegation involves a serious form of harassment, discrimination or retaliation;

- there is a pending Formal Proceeding against the subject of the complaint;
- the subject of the complaint has previously been found to have violated this policy after Formal Proceedings, or
- that a formal proceeding is otherwise appropriate under the circumstances, the designated official must then commence a Formal Proceeding.

Formal Proceedings-Investigation

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

Following a prompt and thorough investigation, the designated official, in consultation with the District Equity Coordinator, will determine whether the allegations have been substantiated, and whether the policy, or, if the subject of the complaint is a student, the 26

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

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

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

Violations

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

False Reports

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

Discipline

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

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

Oversight

The District has designated the Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services as the District Equity Coordinator. The Equity Coordinator will, under the supervision of the Superintendent of Schools, ensure the successful administration of and compliance with this policy.

Information including the name of the Equity Coordinator, his/her mailing address, telephone number and email address will be posted

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

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

Wachusett Regional School District Policy Prohibiting Discrimination

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.

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WRSDC Policy P6631

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES NON-DISCRIMINATION

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.

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 Jeff Carlson, Director of Human Resources, WRSD, 1745 Main St., Jefferson, MA 01522, 508-829-1670

At the District level, the ADA and Section 504 (disability pertaining to students) Coordinator is Catherine Knowles., Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services, WRSD, 1745 Main St., Jefferson, MA 01522, 608-829-1670

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

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

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.

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 days.

Statement

1. An aggrieved party, if not satisfied with the decision of the school committee, may refer the case to the Massachusetts 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.

R8/24/01

WRSDC Policy P6910

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES STUDENT RECORDS

The Wachusett Regional School District shall:

1. Take all reasonable precautions to preserve the confidentiality of a student's records.
2. Make available for inspection all school records of a student upon request of the parent or legal guardian.
3. Make available for inspection all school records of a student upon his or her request provided that the student is fourteen (14) years of age or older or upon entering the ninth grade. 28
4. Disseminate, to parents and students, State Regulations on Student Records and this policy annually.

Regulations:

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

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

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school system about the student. This may include such things as standardized test results, class rank, school sponsored **extracurricular** 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.

WRSDC PolicyP 6515

**POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES
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 advocacy or political 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. The Principal is editor of school publications.
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 or forms or other similar correspondence.

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WRSDC Policy P8130

DISTRIBUTION OF NOTICES BY STUDENTS

The Wachusett Regional School District shall permit only the distribution, via the students, of school and District related notices. WRSDC Policy 813

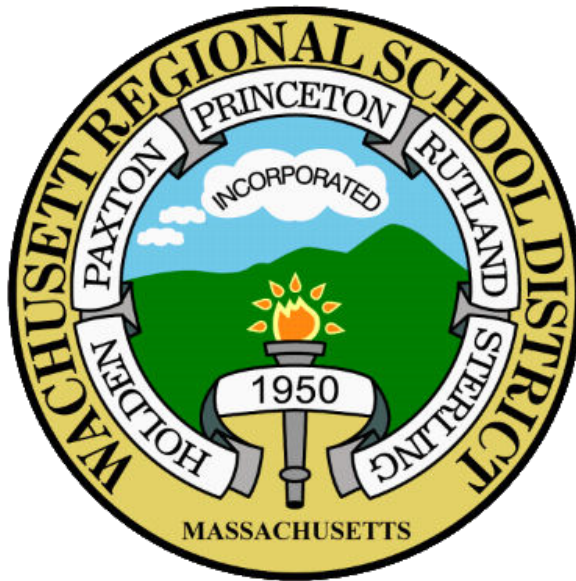
WRSDC Policy P1523

**POLICY RELATING TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONS
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 publication 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 publication

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 ³/₄ - Suspension or Expulsion on Grounds other than Those set forth in Secs. 37H or 37H ¹/₂

(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

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.

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.

POLICY 1523 DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE PUBLICATIONS

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

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

This policy shall be included in all Student Handbooks.

POLICY 3611.4 ENRICHMENT

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

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

Wachusett Regional School District shall:

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

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

POLICY 3625 TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS

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

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

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

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

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

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

POLICY 6400 BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A warrant-less search (non-emergency) of a student's school locker or articles carried upon the student's

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

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

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

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

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

POLICY 6431.1 TOBACCO PRODUCTS ON SCHOOL PREMISES PROHIBITED

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

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

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code. This policy shall be promulgated to all staff and students in appropriate handbook(s) and publications.

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

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

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

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

subject to disciplinary action.

Verbal Screening

- The school district shall utilize, in accordance with law, a verbal screening tool approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to screen students for substance abuse disorders. The tool shall be administered by trained staff on an annual basis at grades 7 and 10.
- Parents/guardians shall be notified of the screening prior to the opening of school each year. Parents/guardians shall have the right to opt out of the screening by written notice prior to or during the screening.
- All statements made by a student during a screening are confidential and shall not be disclosed except in the event of immediate medical emergency or in accordance with law. De-identified results shall be reported to the Department of Public Health within 90 days of the completion of the screening process.

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

POLICY 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.

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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