



**WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**PK - GRADE 5  
2023-2024**

<a href="#"><u>Nabnasset Elementary School</u></a> 99 Plain Road Westford, MA 01886 978-692-5583	<a href="#"><u>Abbot Elementary School</u></a> 25 Depot Street Westford, MA 01886 978-692-5580
<a href="#"><u>Miller Elementary School</u></a> 1 Mitchell Way Westford, MA 01886 978-392-4476	<a href="#"><u>Crisafulli Elementary School</u></a> 13 Robinson Road Westford, MA 01886 978-392-8581
<a href="#"><u>Robinson Elementary School</u></a> 60 Concord Road Westford, MA 01886 978-692-5586	<a href="#"><u>Day Elementary School</u></a> 75 East Prescott Street Westford, MA 01886 978-692-5591

## TRANSLATION

We would be pleased to provide you with a translated version of this Student Handbook. If you are interested in receiving a translated copy, or any other related announcement or information, please contact the main office.

Portuguese: Teremos o prazer de lhe fornecer uma versão traduzida deste Manual do Aluno. Se tiver interesse em receber uma cópia traduzida, ou qualquer outra comunicação ou informação correlata, entre em contato com o escritório principal.

Russian: Мы будем рады предоставить вам переведенную версию этого учебника для студентов. Если вы заинтересованы в получении переведенной копии или любого другого связанного объявления или информации, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с главным офисом.

Spanish: Nos complacería proporcionarle la versión traducida de este Manual del Estudiante. Si le interesa recibir una copia traducida, o cualquier comunicación o información pertinente, comuníquese con la oficina principal

French : Nous pourrions vous faire parvenir sur demande une version en français du guide de l'élève. Si vous vous intéressez à recevoir un exemplaire ou toute autre annonce en français, veuillez contacter le secrétariat du collège au.

Simplified Chinese:

我们很乐意为您提供学生手册的翻译版本。如果您有兴趣收到学生手册的翻译版本或任何其他相关通知或信息，请联系助理学监办公室

Traditional Chinese:

我們很樂意為您提供學生手冊的翻譯版本。如果您有興趣收到學生手冊的翻譯版本或任何其他相關通知或信息，請聯繫助理學監辦公室

Hindi: हम आपको इस छात्र पुस्तिका के अनुवादित संस्करण प्रदान करके प्रसन्न होंगे। यदि आप अनुवादित कॉपी, या किसी अन्य संबंधित घोषणा या जानकारी प्राप्त करने में रुचि रखते हैं, तो कृपया मुख्य कार्यालय से संपर्क करें।

Khmer:

យើងមានសេចក្តីសោមនស្សរីករាយក្នុងការផ្តល់ឱ្យអ្នកនូវកំណែប្រែនៃសៀវភៅសិស្ស។  
ប្រសិនបើអ្នកចាប់អារម្មណ៍ក្នុងការទទួលបានច្បាប់ចម្លងដែលបានបកប្រែឬការប្រកាសឬព័ត៌  
មានដែលពាក់ព័ន្ធផ្សេងទៀតសូមទាក់ទងការិយាល័យយើង។

*Westford Public Schools strive to develop an inclusive and equitable school community where every individual is welcomed, respected, valued, and supported.*

*We strive to reflect and value the faces, voices, and experiences of our diverse community in our curriculum, school activities, and celebrations. We recognize that all members of our community bear responsibility for this important work. Diversity includes but is not limited to: socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion/spiritual beliefs and values, geography, cognitive and physical abilities, and age. Celebrating diversity in Westford schools entails creating equitable learning environments for all students. The diversity among our students, faculty, and staff is essential to achieving the desired outcomes of the school. We aim for students to feel, learn and advance in a manner that reflects themselves, and empowers them to acknowledge the positive attributes that they bring to the learning experiences.*

*An inclusive learning environment will allow all students to learn uninhibitedly, make more significant interpersonal connections with peers and educators, see themselves in the curriculum and surroundings, and protect space for that student to bring their whole authentic self to the learning environment and enriches the overall learning experience. Westford Public Schools is committed to cultivating a sense of belonging in the climate of our school, district, and within the community. When our students feel connected to their educational environment, it generates tremendous benefits to their educational outcomes.*

*Furthermore, students and staff are essential elements to the success of this statement. However, when this statement may be challenged or violated, Westford will hold individuals accountable for their actions or conduct and seek to repair harm or damage to any individual.*

### **DISCLAIMER**

Westford public school district reserves the right to make necessary changes in the student handbook.

**CHRISTOPHER CHEW, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

**KERRY CLERY, Ed.D.**  
Assistant Superintendent



**COURTNEY L. MORAN, M.Ed.**  
Director of Pupil Services

**MAGALY RODRIGUEZ RONAN, M.Ed.**  
Director of Equity, Curriculum, and Instruction

**Westford Public Schools  
Administrative Offices**

23 Depot St. • Westford, Massachusetts 01886  
www.westfordk12.us • (978) 692-5560 • FAX (978) 392-4497

August, 2023

Re: Westford Elementary Welcome Back To School Letter

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

We extend a warm welcome to you as the new school year begins, and are looking forward to getting to know your children and helping them to reach their full potential.

The purpose of this handbook is to share important general information about policies and procedures of Westford's elementary schools. The procedures in this handbook are consistent throughout the system and are based upon the policies of Westford Public Schools, which are noted with reference numbers. The complete text of policies can be accessed [online](#). Policy manuals are also available for reference in each school office. In addition to this handbook, principals will send home information about school procedures and the Code of Conduct, which reflect the unique culture and character of each school.

Please take a few moments to read the contents of this handbook and review pertinent information with your child. The handbook contains many answers to questions you may have about day-to-day procedures and policies and is a useful reference to keep on hand. Please follow your child's school procedures for indicating your permissions for community and world publishing.

As partners in your child's education, we look forward to a successful and rewarding 2023-2024 school year.

Sincerely,

Westford Public School Elementary Administrative Team  
**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIRECTORY**

SCHOOL	ADMINISTRATOR NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION
Abbot	Peter Myerson, Principal Melissa Richard, Assistant Principal	978 692-5580 <a href="#">School Website</a>
Crisafulli	Sharon Kennelly, Principal Jennifer Hutchinson, Assistant Principal	978 392-4483 <a href="#">School Website</a>
Day	Chris Louis Sardella, Principal Chrissy Michaud, Assistant Principal	978 692-5591 <a href="#">School Website</a>
Miller	Melissa Boylan, Principal Heather Newman, Assistant Principal	978 392-4476 <a href="#">School Website</a>
Nabnasset	Susan DuBois, Principal Carolyn Jerzylo, Assistant Principal	978 692-5583 <a href="#">School Website</a>
Robinson	Kevin LaCoste, Principal Scott Middlemiss, Assistant Principal	978 692-5586 <a href="#">School Website</a>

**DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION**  
**Central Office 978-692-5560**

Superintendent of Schools, Christopher Chew, EdD	Extension 2102
Assistant Superintendent, Kerry Clery, EdD	Extension 2104
Director of Pupil Services, Courtney Moran, M.Ed.	Extension 2112
Title VI and Title IX Coordinator, Christopher Chew, EdD	Extension 2102
Homeless Coordinator/504 Courtney Moran, M.Ed.	Extension 2112
Director of Equity, Curriculum, and Instruction, Magaly R. Ronan M.Ed.	Extension 2141

Director of Finance, Jenny Lin, CPA	Extension 2106
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### **2023-2024 Westford School Committee**

Mrs. Kathryn Clear  
 Mrs. Marsol Garcia  
 Mr. Sean Kelly  
 Mr. William MacDonald  
 Mr. Chris Sanders  
 Mrs. Valery Young  
 Mr. Mingquan Zheng

### **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

The Westford Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, homelessness, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment in its programs and activities. Accordingly, no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school or in employment in its services in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Age Discrimination Act) and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967. Nor does it discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, gender identity or sexual orientation, in accordance with Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971 (M.G.L. c. 76 s. 5) and M.G.L. Chapter 151B. The District also does not discriminate on the basis of homelessness in a manner consistent with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act. Inquiries about these non-discrimination laws may be directed to the District Coordinators named below.

ADA (Employee) Coordinator: Dr. Christopher Chew, Superintendent of Schools

ADA (Student) Coordinator: Ms. Courtney Moran, Director of Pupil Services

Homeless Coordinator: Ms. Courtney Moran, Director of Pupil Services

Section 504 Coordinator: Ms. Courtney Moran, Director of Pupil Services

Title VI Coordinator: Dr. Christopher Chew, Superintendent of Schools

Title IX Coordinator: Dr. Christopher Chew, Superintendent of Schools

Westford Public Schools

23 Depot Street  
Westford, Massachusetts 01886

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## WESTFORD ELEMENTARY CORE VALUES

The K-5 elementary administrative team has adopted consistent core values so each of six school communities can show our Westford **SPIRIT**. Throughout the school year classroom lessons and whole school meetings will incorporate the following core values.

<b>S</b> safety	Students of the Westford Public Schools will demonstrate <b>SAFETY</b> . They will honor others' space and property, and will keep their hands, feet, and other objects to themselves. They will exhibit self-control by walking as they travel throughout the school building, by using an appropriate voice level for the setting, and by following directions and instructions given by adults the first time. They will use words and adult intervention to solve problems.
<b>P</b> erseverance	Students of the Westford Public Schools will demonstrate <b>PERSEVERANCE</b> . They will set goals and strive to reach them each day. They will work hard and not give up even when something is difficult. They will demonstrate a growth mindset when met with challenging tasks and activities. They will keep a positive attitude.
<b>I</b> nclusion	Students of the Westford Public Schools will demonstrate <b>INCLUSION</b> . They have a responsibility to break down barriers by inviting new people into teams, circle of friends, and experiences as they work to be a unified, collaborative community. They will show acceptance to everyone around them.
<b>R</b> espect	Students of the Westford Public Schools will demonstrate <b>RESPECT</b> . They will think about others before speaking or taking any action. They will appreciate the contributions of others, while showing respect for themselves, other people, personal and/or community property, and the environment. They will treat others the way that they want to be treated.
<b>I</b> ntegrity	Students of the Westford Public Schools will demonstrate <b>INTEGRITY</b> . They will do the right thing, even when no one is watching. They will show good character. They will be honest, fair, and humble. They will exercise their best effort and judgment in all activities in which they participate and will set goals that promote positive academic, social, and personal development.
<b>T</b> eamwork	Students of the Westford Public Schools will demonstrate <b>TEAMWORK</b> . They will encourage others to do their best. They will listen to the ideas of others, while also sharing their ideas to ensure the best end product. They will show empathy, considering another person's situation, feelings, or motives before speaking or taking action. They will compromise when necessary. They will behave in a manner that allows all others to enjoy a safe, positive learning community.

## **HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

Home/school communication is a vital component of school success. Forms of communication may include newsletters, email messages, automated telephone messages, web sites, and Parent/Caregiver nights. The Superintendent of Schools will alert Parent/Caregiver through email or an automated phone message using contact information listed on the student's emergency card. If contact information changes, please contact your child's school office.

### **GUIDELINES FOR POSITIVE HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

#### **If a problem occurs:**

1. Start with the staff member most directly involved (teacher, administrative assistant).
2. The guidance counselor is a resource for support in resolving concerns at any step of the process.

#### **For effective communication, keep in mind:**

1. Define your concerns clearly.
2. Express your concerns in a respectful manner.
3. Listen to what the other party has to say without interrupting.
4. Remain open-minded about what the other party has to say.
5. Remember what problem you are trying to solve and remember your goal.
6. Remember that both parties may need a chance to voice their feelings.

#### **We suggest the following chain of communication:**

1. Student with teacher. (We will support your child to communicate with teacher.)
2. Student and Parent/Caregiver with teacher.
3. Student and Parent/Caregiver with Assistant Principal/Principal.

### **\*\*ATTENTION VISITORS\*\***

All visitors must enter the school through the front door. Entry and check in at the Main Office  
Visitor badges are required.

### **CRIMINAL OFFENDER RECORD INFORMATION (CORI)**

All school visitors who have not completed a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check must be accompanied by a designated school representative at all times. All Westford Public Schools volunteers must complete a CORI check annually, *no later than December 21st each year*.

### **FINGERPRINTING**

On January 10, 2013 the national criminal background check regulation was signed into law. As a result of this law, in addition to staff, Westford Public Schools requires all field trip chaperones and volunteer athletic coaches to abide by the fingerprinting obligation. Instructions on scheduling an appointment may

be found [here](#). Fingerprint reports are sent directly to the Office of the Superintendent. You will only be notified if you are not approved for volunteering.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Westford Public School Calendar

[District Calendar](#)

### School Hours

Pre-School: 9:00 AM - 3:10 PM

Grade K-2: Robinson, Nabnasset and Miller  
9:05 AM - 3:10 PM

Kindergarten Hours – Monday - Friday  
AM Kindergarten 9:05 AM – 11:35 AM  
PM Kindergarten 12:40 PM – 3:10 PM

Grade 3-5: Abbot, Day and Crisafulli  
8:25 AM - 2:30 PM

## ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

<i>Abbot</i>	978-692-5580	Sarah Edgecomb Chris Roberge
<i>Crisafulli</i>	978-392-4483	Amy Dulong Andrea McCarthy
<i>Day</i>	978-692-5591	Kathy Norton Nanci DiNitto
<i>Miller</i>	978-392-4476	Sandra Brake Nanci DiNitto
<i>Nabnasset</i>	978-692-5583	JoAnn Webster Chris Roberge
<i>Robinson</i>	978 692-5586	Joann Beliveau Andrea McCarthy

## **ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES**

Research indicates a high correlation between the number of days absent and academic achievement. Habitual absenteeism may contribute to low academic achievement. The Westford School Committee and the Westford Public Schools believe in the importance of regular school attendance. Except in cases of illness and extenuating circumstances, students are expected to be present when school is in session. Parents/Caregivers are strongly urged not to schedule family vacations during school days and not to extend the scheduled vacation periods. Teachers are not required to provide advance assignments to students, and the school and the individual teacher(s) are not required to assume responsibility for providing individual tutoring or extensive individual help for the student when they return.

According to Massachusetts General Law (School Attendance, Chapter 76), all children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) must attend school, and a school district may excuse up to seven (7) day sessions or fourteen (14) half day sessions in any period of six (6) months. The law also states that Parents/Caregivers must be provided each year with the instructions for calling a designated phone number at a designated time to inform the school of the absence of a student and the reason for the absence. In addition, Parents/Caregivers must provide the school with a home, work, or other emergency telephone number so that they may be contacted during the school day so the school may call and inquire about said absence. It is also the responsibility of the school district to designate a supervisor of attendance who has the power to apprehend and take to school any child who is truant and is required to investigate all cases where a child is failing to attend school.

### **Parent/Caregiver and School Responsibilities**

Parents/Caregivers are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. When, due to unexcused absences, a student has missed two (2) or more periods in five (5) school days, or has missed five (5) or more school days in the school year, the parents/caregivers will be notified and provided an opportunity to meet with the Principal, or Principal's designee, to develop an action plan to address the student's school attendance. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human services, housing and non-profit agencies.

Pupil absence notices to parents/caregivers and pupil absence meetings with parents/caregivers will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c. 76, §1B. Each Principal or designee will notify a student's Parents/Caregivers within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the Parents/Caregivers have not informed the school of the absence.

Additionally, under Massachusetts General Laws chapter 119, section 51A, a report of educational neglect can be filed with the Department of Child and Family Services (DCF), on behalf of a child under the age of eighteen (18), if a child is not attending school on a regular basis.

An Application for a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) may also be filed in the Juvenile Court:

THE FIVE TYPES OF CRA CASES, as defined in M.G.L. c. 119, § 21:

1. “*Runaway*”: A child between the ages of 6 and 18 who “repeatedly runs away from the home of a parent, caregiver, legal guardian or custodian having custody of the child,” each of whom may apply to the court for assistance. M.G.L. c. 119, § 39E.

2. “*Stubborn Child*”: A child between 6 and 18 who repeatedly fails to obey reasonable home rules, thereby interfering with the caregiver’s ability to care for the child. A Parent/Caregiver/Custodian may apply to the court for assistance. M.G.L. c. 119, § 39E.

3. “*Habitual School Offender*”: A child between the ages of 6 and 18 who repeatedly fails to obey school rules. A school district may file an application but must state the specific steps that the school district has taken to improve the child’s conduct. M.G.L. c. 119, § 39E. A school-filed matter must be dismissed when the student turns 16. M.G.L. c. 119, § 39G.

4. “*Habitual Truant*”: A child between 6 and 18, who, without excuse, willfully fails to attend school for more than 8 days in a quarter. The school applicant must state whether or not the child and the child's family have participated in a truancy prevention program. M.G.L. c. 119, § 39E. Under M.G. L. c. 119, § 39G, dismissal must occur when the child turns 16. (Note the contradiction regarding age limits in these statutory provisions.)

5. “*Sexually Exploited Child*”: Any person under 18 who has been subjected to sexual exploitation. This includes anyone who: is the victim of sexual servitude or sex trafficking; engages in sexual conduct for a fee or in exchange for food, shelter, clothing, education or care; is the victim of the crime of inducing a minor into prostitution; or engages in common night walking/street walking. M.G.L. c. 119, § 21. A caregiver or a police officer may file an application. M.G.L. c. 119, § 39L

### **Parent/Caregiver Responsibility**

Parents/Caregivers are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. When, due to unexcused absences, a student has missed two (2) or more periods in five (5) school days, or has missed five (5) or more school days in the school year, the school will notify the Parents/Caregivers of the attendance record. Following, a meeting will be conducted with the parents/caregivers and student to develop a plan to address the student’s attendance.

## **Truancy**

Students who are absent without legitimate excuses are considered truant. Truancy and leaving the school building without permission are serious offenses and will be discussed with the parent or caregiver.

## **Absence due to family vacation**

Families are strongly discouraged from taking vacation while school is in session. A packet of work from the teacher cannot replace what happens in the classroom; therefore, it should not be requested. Students are encouraged to read and practice mathematical concepts while away from school. Missed assignments and assessments should be made up upon return to school.

Prior to any planned travel which will result in a student's absence for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, a Parent/Caregiver must: (a) un-enroll their child from school; and (b) either complete a Homeschool Application, or identify the school in which they will enroll their child during said absence.

## **Reporting a Student Absence**

Whenever a child is going to be absent from school, the Parent/Caregiver is required to call the school on the date of absence. The absentee line is available twenty four (24) hours per day. In the event that a child's name is on the school's absentee list and a telephone call has not been received, the office will call the child's home. If verification is not received from home, the office will refer to the list of names supplied by the Parent/Caregiver on the Pupil Information Card to call for verification. If verification is still not received, the school may call the Westford Police Department to investigate the absence.

## **Excused and Unexcused Absences**

Examples of **excused absences** are absences for illness of the student (a doctor's certificate is required for an absence of five (5) days or more), death in the student's family, observance of a religious holiday, court appointments, or school sanctioned absences. An **unexcused absence/tardy** occurs when school-age children are absent from school, *with or without Parent/Caregiver approval*, for any other reasons, including, but not limited to, family vacation, doing errands, etc. When, due to unexcused absences, a student has missed two (2) or more periods in five (5) school days, or has missed five (5) or more school days in the school year, the school will notify the Parent/Caregiver of the attendance record. Following, a meeting will be conducted with the parents/caregivers and student to develop a plan to address the student's attendance.

## **Reporting a Child's Absence or Late Arrival**

### **Tardiness**

Being on time is everyone's responsibility. Children are tardy if they arrive after the start of the school day and must report to the office before entering classrooms to sign in as tardy (see page 9 for start times).

**Absence**

If a child is not attending school, the parent or caregiver must call or email the school office. If a telephone call is not received, school staff will telephone the home. This procedure assures the safety of all children. When calling the school, please note the reason for absence (sickness, medical appointment, religious holiday). Parents/Caregivers can call the school communicating a student absence twenty-four hours a day. Voice mail will take the message when office personnel are not available to answer the telephone. In the event of excessive tardiness and unexcused absences, parents/caregivers may expect to meet with the school principal.

**Note:** Students may not attend night events (concerts, STEM Fair, PTO Activities, etc.) if they were absent that school day due to illness.

**Returning to school after an absence**

When a student is absent from school five consecutive days or more due to illness a note from a physician stating the reason for absence should be forwarded to school upon the child's return.

**Observance of a religious holiday**

Refer to Westford Public Schools Policy [P5114](#)

Observance of a religious holiday shall be viewed as valid justification for student absence, late homework/project submission and delayed testing, only when the teacher has been notified of the observance date no later than two weeks in advance. It is the responsibility of the student's Parent/Caregiver to notify the teacher of these dates at the beginning of the school year.

**Dismissal**

If a Parent/Caregiver does not want their child to ride their regular assigned bus home, the following procedure should be followed:

- Please be mindful of dismissing your child within twenty minutes of school closing
- A note must be received to inform the school of a change in dismissal plans. The note must indicate: who will be picking up the child, if other than the Parent/Caregiver, and indicate whether it is a school lobby or car pick up
- Parents/Caregivers must sign out the student in the main office. Students will be dismissed from the office
- Refer to the school office for more specific information pertaining to your child's school
- Vehicle Identification Cards (VIC) must be visible during car pick up.
- Any special circumstances (court orders) regarding child safety must be shared with the school principal
- A child taking a different bus must have a signed note for the driver.

**DELAYED OPENING SCHEDULE**

Grade PK-2 Schools: Miller, Nabnasset, Robinson	1 hour delay	10:05 AM
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		2 hour delay	11:05 AM
Grade 3-5 Schools:	Abbot, Crisafulli, Day	1 hour delay	9:25 AM
		2 hour delay	10:25 AM

### Delayed openings and early release days

During the course of the year, there are delayed openings and early release days to provide time for teachers' professional development, planning and Parent/Caregiver/teacher conferences. The district calendar may be accessed [here](#).

### EARLY RELEASE & SCHEDULE

On early release days, instruction continues as usual. It is important for students to attend school each day. If changes in dismissal or special arrangements are needed on early release days please notify the school in writing.

#### Early Release SCHEDULE

<b>Pre-School</b>	AM Pre-School	9:05 AM - 11:30 AM
	PM Pre-School	No School
<b>Grade K-2</b>	9:05 AM- 12:20 PM	
<b>Grades 3-5</b>	8:25 AM -11:40 AM	

### SCHOOL CLOSING

If inclement weather forces the cancellation of school, the superintendent of schools will contact families via phone. The decision is also announced on several radio stations including: WCAP (980), WLLH (1400), WBZ (1030), WRKO (680). The following television stations will also announce decisions: WBZ (4), WCVB (5), WHDH (7) and Westford Cable Channel 8. The district [website](#) will also post this information. In the event of a one hour delayed start, AM Kindergarten will be delayed by that time.

***Please Note:*** *In the event of a delay or snow day, the EARLY ARRIVAL PROGRAMS, such as Chorus, Band, Orchestra or Student Council will not take place.*

### EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

If it is necessary to dismiss students before the regular dismissal due to a building or weather emergency, the following procedure will be followed:

- Local radio stations and local cable television will be notified to announce the decision.

- Emergency School Closing announcement will be transmitted through the use of our automated telephone system as well as the email list serve.
- Each school has an evacuation plan that relocates all occupants to another school if the emergency affects just one school
- All parents/caregivers are encouraged to have a back up plan in case of an emergency school closing.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)**

All parents/caregivers are required to complete a Home Language Survey at registration. If another language, in addition to English, is spoken at home, or if a student's first language is not English, the student will be assessed for English language proficiency. Students scoring below expectations on the English language proficiency testing will be recommended for ELL services and will receive support services during the school day.

Students receiving ELL support are required to participate in statewide assessments. If parents/caregivers elect to exclude their child from ELL services, they must check the box marked "No" on the Permission for Services form or contact the principal. Students will exit the ELL Program after passing statewide testing, and based on the results of standardized testing, classroom performance and teacher recommendation.

## **ACADEMICS**

### **HOMEWORK** (see School Committee Policy [P6112](#))

**Rationale:** Homework should be a useful adjunct to in-school learning. It should be an application or adaptation of a classroom experience.

**Purpose:** Homework consists of assignments or activities intended for:

- Preview/Preparation for an upcoming class.
- Practice/Refinement/Reinforcement of skills and concepts learned in class.
- Integration of newly learned concepts and skills with what students already know.

Beyond these provisions, the Westford Public Schools believe that truly effective homework includes the following considerations:

- It should be meaningful for students by having real world connections when applicable.
- It should contain problem-solving activities and assignments that challenge students to think critically.
- It may include project-oriented, long-term assignments to enable students to integrate their learning.
- It should be differentiated in accordance with needs, skill deficits, and strengths of students when necessary.
- It should incorporate student choice when appropriate.
- It should provide challenge and extensions to further expand opportunities for learning.

**Expectations:** We acknowledge that students work at different paces; therefore, the homework times listed in our regulation ([P6112](#)) are intended to be used as a guide. These times are to identify a maximum number of minutes per night and do not reflect the amount of homework a teacher is “supposed to” assign to students. Homework assignments are assigned at the discretion of the teacher as long as it meets at least one purpose listed above and does not exceed the times listed below. As a result, teachers are welcome to assign less than the maximum amounts. Additionally, if a teacher sees that a student has mastery of a certain concept and, as a result, the student will not benefit from additional practice, it is appropriate to modify the quantity or expectations to avoid “busy work” assignments.

### **Times & Responsibilities:**

The maximum times below refer to assigned nightly homework and do not include reading for pleasure or practice with a self-selected text, which is encouraged. Home expectations for long-term projects that are assigned will be included in the nightly maximum.

#### **HOMEWORK GUIDELINES**

<b>Time Expectations</b>	<b>Teacher Responsibilities</b>	<b>Student Responsibilities</b>	<b>Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities</b>
<b>KINDERGARTEN</b>	There will be no regularly assigned nightly HW. Teachers will provide students/families with suggestions on activities that will reinforce concepts taught in the classroom.	Students are encouraged to practice reading or listening to someone read to them each night with an adult or older child.	Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to incorporate the school-suggested activities with their child, when appropriate. Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to read with their child on a nightly basis.
<b>GRADE 1</b> From 0 to 10 minutes per night  <b>GRADE 2</b> From 0 to 15 minutes per night	HW will be assigned with a greater emphasis on literacy and math.  No HW will be assigned over weekends or school vacations/holiday breaks.	HW is a cooperative effort between the Parent/Caregiver and child.	HW is a cooperative effort between the Parents/Caregivers and child. Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to designate an appropriate HW area with limited distractions for their child. Parents/Caregivers should stop the student if HW is exceeding the maximum number of minutes. If your child’s HW exceeds maximum minutes on a consistent basis, please communicate with the classroom teacher so adjustments can be made.
<b>GRADE 3</b> From 0 to 20 minutes per night	HW will be assigned with a greater emphasis on literacy and math. No HW will be assigned over weekends or school vacations/holiday breaks.	HW is primarily the responsibility of the student. Students should complete HW on time and according to teacher guidelines. Students are responsible for obtaining from their teachers any missed assignments.	Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to designate an appropriate HW area with limited distractions for their child. Parents/Caregivers should ensure that the HW submitted to the teacher is a true reflection of the child’s ability and/or understanding. Parents/Caregivers should assist their child to ensure the student’s HW has been completed and is ready to be returned to school. Parents/Caregivers should stop the student if HW is exceeding the maximum number of minutes. If your child’s HW exceeds maximum minutes on a consistent basis, please communicate with the classroom teacher so adjustments can be made.
<b>GRADE 4</b> From 0 to 30 minutes per night  <b>GRADE 5</b> From 0 to 40 minutes per night	In addition to focusing on literacy and math, there may be HW in other subject areas as well. In addition, long-term projects will be assigned. Homework expectations for long-term projects are included in the nightly maximum as well.	HW is primarily the responsibility of the student. Students should complete HW on time and according to teacher guidelines. Students are responsible for obtaining from their teachers any missed assignments.	Parents/Caregivers are encouraged to assist their child in making sure there is an appropriate HW area in the home. Parents/Caregivers should ensure that the HW submitted to the teacher is a true reflection of the child’s ability and understanding. Parents/Caregivers should assist the child to ensure the student’s HW has been completed and is ready to be returned to school. Parents/Caregivers should stop the student if HW is

minutes per night	No HW will be assigned over weekends or school vacations/holiday breaks.		exceeding the maximum number of minutes. If your child's HW exceeds maximum minutes on a consistent basis, please communicate with the classroom teacher so adjustments can be made.
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## PROGRESS REPORTS

Our progress report provides caregivers with more in-depth information and is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework and Common Core and will reflect assessment of standards. Refer to the [Progress Report Handbook](#).

## Parent/Caregiver - TEACHER CONFERENCES

Formal Parent/Caregiver - Teacher conferences are held twice a year. Conferences are scheduled in advance and each conference is allotted 10 minutes. The purpose of the conference is to provide an overview of your child's academic progress. The conference is not intended to be used to discuss concerns. To do so please schedule a separate meeting with your child's teacher. The following is a link from *The Learning Community* to help you make the most of your Parent/Caregiver - Teacher conference, [Tips for parents/caregivers](#).

## Westford Public School Policy References:

Promotion and Retention of Students School Committee [P6109](#)

Students shall be promoted to, or retained in, the grade level to which they are best adjusted academically, socially, and emotionally. Students are promoted to the next grade level unless a decision is made otherwise. This decision is made jointly by the school administrator, guidance counselor, teachers, and parents/caregivers with the school administrator moderating any disagreements and making the final decision. The educational program shall provide for the continuous progress of children from grade to grade with children normally spending one year in each grade.

## [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](#)

## SPECIAL EVENTS

At different times during the school year, enrichment experiences are scheduled for students. Programs such as plays are presented by various grades during the holiday period, in the spring, and on commemorative days such as Memorial Day. These activities provide self-expression opportunities and are learning experiences. Parent/Caregiver groups sometimes schedule enrichment programs to further help children learn. To help all enjoy the important qualities of these programs, children should:

- listen without disturbing others
- be polite and ask questions by raising hands

- show appreciation by applause
- answer when called on
- are the judge of a good audience.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

### **Birthday Invitations**

Party invitations should not be brought to school and birthday invitations should be distributed to children outside of school hours. School personnel are prohibited from releasing student information for this purpose.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

The increasing number of food allergies and medical conditions related to diet pose serious ramifications when food is brought into the school. For this reason, all classes will celebrate student birthdays without food. Teachers will recognize student birthdays in a variety of ways with observances that acknowledge each student's special day in a consistent and thoughtful manner.

### **Classroom Rewards**

Food will not be used as an incentive or as a reward.

### **Snacks**

Nutritious snacks can be provided from home, and should be easy to eat. Refrigeration and microwaving are unable to be provided.

## **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

Beginning in third grade children may elect to play a musical instrument. In grades 3-5 children may choose to participate in the Strings Program, while in grades 4 and 5 may participate in the Band Program. Lessons or rehearsals may be scheduled before school, during recess, specialists' blocks, and academic classes.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are learning experiences organized to enhance the school curriculum. Written Parent/Caregiver permission is required for all children to participate. Donations are appreciated for field trips. Schools look for volunteers to chaperone field trips. All chaperones must be approved through the CORI process and fingerprinting may be required at the discretion of the principal. The behavioral expectations for these activities are the same as in the classroom. The expectation is that children will:

- Remain with the teacher or other adult assistant
- Walk, not run to exhibits
- Be polite and wait turn to ask questions
- Follow all bus rules to and from the field trip, no eating on the bus

- Not bring cameras or hand held electronic devices
- Not bring money for souvenirs
- Ask permission from the adult chaperone/teacher to leave the group
- Have medication dispensed by the nurse; volunteers shall not dispense medication, such as Tylenol, Advil, Benadryl, etc.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

The Westford Public Schools complies with applicable federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to student records. Those laws and regulations are designed to ensure a parent's/caregiver's and eligible student's rights to access, inspect, and to request amendment of the child's student record. The Massachusetts Student Record Regulations and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) apply to all information kept by a school 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, 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, school sponsored extracurricular activities, and evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons. The temporary record is destroyed no later than seven years after the student leaves the school system.

The following is a summary of major Parent/Caregiver and student rights regarding their student records:

*Inspection of Record* – A Parent/Caregiver, 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/Caregiver or eligible student within ten (10) days of the request, unless the Parent/Caregiver or eligible student consents to a delay. In the event the Parent/Caregiver or eligible student requests copies of a student record, the District may charge the Parent/Caregiver/eligible student for said copies at the District rate.

*Confidentiality of Record* – With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the Parent/Caregiver, eligible student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without specific, informed, written consent of the Parent/Caregiver or eligible student.

*Amendment of Record* – The Parent/Caregiver and eligible students have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the Parent/Caregiver and eligible students have the right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. The Parent/Caregiver and eligible students 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/Caregiver or eligible student is not satisfied with the decision, the student record 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/Caregiver and eligible student must be notified, and have an opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before its destruction.

### **Transfer of Records**

It is the practice of the Westford Public Schools to forward the student record of any student who transfers to another public school district upon request of the receiving district.

### **Non-Custodial Parent/Caregiver**

Unless there is a court order to the contrary, a non-custodial Parent/Caregiver (Parent/Caregiver without physical custody of the child) of any public school student has the right, subject to certain procedures, to receive information regarding the student's achievements, involvement, behavior, etc. A non-custodial Parent/Caregiver who wishes to have this information shall submit a written request annually to the child's school principal. Upon receipt of such a request, the principal shall send written notification to the custodial Parent/Caregiver by certified and first class mail that the records and information will be provided to the non-custodial Parent/Caregiver in twenty one (21) calendar days unless the custodial Parent/Caregiver provides documentation of the non-custodial Parent/Caregiver's ineligibility to access such information. In all cases where school records are provided to a non-custodial Parent/Caregiver, the electronic and postal address and any other contact information for the custodial Parent/Caregiver shall be removed from the records provided. Any such records provided to the non-custodial Parent/Caregiver shall be marked to indicate that they may not be used to enroll the student in another school. Upon receipt of a court order that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school will notify the non-custodial Parent/Caregiver that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial Parent/Caregiver.

### **DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

Federal law requires that the District release the names, addresses and telephone listings of students to military recruiters and institutions of higher education upon request for recruitment and scholarship purposes, without prior consent. In addition, the District may release the following directory information about a student without prior consent: a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major fields of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, post-high school plans and directory information such as homeroom assignments. However, in all instances listed above, Parent/Caregivers may request that such directory information not be released without prior consent by notifying the school in writing by the end of September of each school year. Homeless status is confidential and shall not constitute directory information.

### **DIRECTORY INFORMATION (School Committee P6111)**

Directory Information is defined as the information contained in the student record which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Directory Information may be disclosed without prior written consent.

The following categories of information has been designated by the Westford School Committee as Directory Information:

- First name, Last initial
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level

Extracurricular activities  
Awards or honors

Parent/Caregiver or legal guardians must notify the school in writing to impose any restriction to the District's release of Directory Information as it applies to their child. Authorization to withhold Directory Information will remain in effect until the beginning of the next school year or until the Parent/Caregiver submits written notification to the school office.

### **THIRD PARTY ACCESS**

Authorized school personnel, to include (a) school administrators, teachers, counselors, and other professionals who are employed by the school committee or who are providing services to the student under an agreement between the school committee and a service provider, and who are working directly with the student in an administrative, teaching, counseling, and/or diagnostic capacity; (b) administrative office staff and clerical personnel, employed by the school committee or under a school committee service contract, and whose duties require them to have access to student records for purposes of processing information for the student record; and (c) the Evaluation Team which evaluates a student, shall have access to the student record of students to whom they are providing services, when such access is required in the performance of their official duties. The consent of the Parent/Caregiver or eligible student shall not be necessary.

### **COMPLAINTS**

A Parent/Caregiver or eligible student has the right to file a complaint with either agency:

Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue SW Washington, D.C. 20202-5920 (800) 872-5327	Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 75 Pleasant Street Malden, Massachusetts 02148 (781) 338-3000
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If you have any questions regarding this notice, or would like more information and/or a copy of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Student Record Regulations, please contact the building principal.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS**

Special Education records will be destroyed seven (7) years after date of graduation. These records are kept in, and may be picked up from, the Special Education Office in the Central Office Administration Building.

### **MCAS TESTING**

Elementary students in grades 3, 4, and 5 will participate in English Language Arts and Mathematics MCAS testing. Additionally, students in grade 5 participate in Science, Technology, and Engineering MCAS testing. The MCAS test gives teachers an idea of the progress students have made in learning the knowledge and applying the skills outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum frameworks. The results of the assessment are one tool teachers use to plan instructional practices and supports students need to be successful. The results of the MCAS do not determine placement for the next grade level nor have any influence over how teachers report individual student progress for this school year.



Students with disabilities who are unable to participate in standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations, may complete the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) — a portfolio of work samples that demonstrate a student's academic knowledge, skills, and achievements. No exams/quizzes will be administered, or homework will be due, to students taking MCAS during MCAS testing.

## **CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM**

Whenever a student is guilty of cheating or plagiarism, the teacher shall confiscate the student's paper, and notify the Parent/Caregiver and administration as to the action taken. Examples of cheating or plagiarism may include, but are not limited to, the following: providing materials (tests, quizzes, projects or papers) to another student from a current or previously taken course; copying another student's work or working with other students to complete an assignment when not instructed to do so by the teacher; purposeful communication of information and/or use of unauthorized resources during a testing environment (smart watches, cell phones, wearable technology); and purposeful distribution of work/answers via printed, electronic, or verbal format to other students when such work will be considered for grading purposes.

## **WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?**

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

## **ACCORDING TO THE MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY, TO "PLAGIARIZE" MEANS ...**

- to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- to commit literary theft
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE**

The atmosphere of a school is a reflection of the attitude of its students and staff toward the school and toward each other. It is of equal concern that we achieve an atmosphere of order, self-discipline, safety, and mutual respect.

### **Code of Conduct**

Each school has a written Code of Conduct outlining expected behavior of the school community. This Code of Conduct will be distributed at the beginning of the school year and is considered part of the elementary school handbook.

**M.G.L c. 71, §37H <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>: Suspension or expulsion on grounds other than those set forth in § 37H or § 37H<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>**

**Out of School Suspensions under M.G.L c. 71, § 37H <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>: In accordance with the requirements of M.G.L.**

c. 71, § 37H3/4, as amended through Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022, all school principals and principal's designees and the Superintendent and Superintendent's designees when acting as a decision-maker at a disciplinary hearing or appeal to consider student discipline for violations of school rules other than offenses involving drugs, weapons, assaults on school staff and felony offenses, shall, when deciding the consequences for the student, consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process. The principal or designee shall not suspend the student until alternative remedies have been employed, and their use and results documented unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies would be unsuitable or counter-productive, or unless 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. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4(b). Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving.

### **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), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services. Students who have been found to have a disability that impacts upon a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act are, generally, also 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 exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

1. Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to ten (10) school days 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 school days in a given school year or subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a "change in placement", building administrators, the Parent/Caregiver, 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). In most instances, during disciplinary exclusions exceeding ten (10) school days in a single school year, the student shall have the right to receive the services identified as necessary by the Team to provide him/her with a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion.
2. If building administrators, the Parent/Caregiver, and relevant members of the 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 provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment.
3. If building administrators, the Parent/Caregiver, and relevant members of the IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to the disciplinary action was a manifestation

of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further disciplinary removal or exclusion from the student's current educational program based on that conduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the Parent/Caregiver consent to a new placement, or until the District obtains an order from court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) 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.

### **Behavior Philosophy**

The Westford Elementary Schools faculty and staff believe all students are capable of being upstanding members of our school community. We believe discipline is an opportunity for students to learn from their mistakes. At times students may need reminders and lessons to support their understanding and application of our core values. Teachers and administrators will strive to choose logical consequences to help students demonstrate more appropriate behaviors and repair the problem or relationships.

### **Unexpected Behaviors and Logical Consequences**

Below is a list of unexpected behaviors and possible logical consequences a student may receive. When necessary, we will communicate these consequences to the Parent/Caregiver and ask for support in reinforcing expectations. Whenever possible, guidance will provide support to students in helping to reinforce school expectations.

<b>Level One Behaviors</b>	<b>Logical Consequences</b>
<b>Cutting in Line, Running inside School, Yelling, etc.</b>	For level one behaviors, school staff members will provide redirection. For example, a student may be asked to retrace their steps and walk in the hallway if they are running.

<b>Level Two Behaviors</b>	<b>Logical Consequences</b>
<b>Disruptive or Uncooperative</b>	School staff may ask student to take a break. School staff may use verbal and/or non-verbal cues to redirect student. During class meetings, teacher may role play the expectations for cooperative behavior. When possible, student may be given limited choices to get back on track. At times, nonaggressive behavior may be ignored until student calms down.
<b>Name Calling/Spreading Rumors</b>	School staff may have a conversation with student about the power of words and how it may make another child feel. Student may be asked to complete an act of kindness or a verbal or written apology appropriate to the situation.
<b>Inappropriate Contact with Others/ Throwing Objects at Others</b>	School staff will ask student to leave the area. School staff will have a conversation with student and ask for a written reflection about safe choices. Student may be separated from victims for a determined period. Additionally, students may not be allowed to participate in related activities for a determined period.
<b>Not allowing others to participate</b>	Students will participate in a discussion about including others. Students may lose privileges if the exclusion happens during a game or activity. Students may be expected to invite others to join for the next activity.
<b>Leaving area without permission</b>	School staff will review rules with students. Student's freedom to use restrooms, go to lockers or other areas of the school will be closely monitored. A plan will be in place for frequent infractions.

<b>Disrespectful to Adult</b>	School staff will have a conversation with students about respect and tone. Students may be asked to write an apology after careful reflection.
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The following behaviors will involve a loss of privileges so administration can discuss behaviors and appropriate ways to resolve problems. Repeated offenses may include community service, written apologies, or written behavior agreements.

<b>Level Three Behaviors</b>	<b>Logical Consequences</b>
<b>Damage to Property</b>	Administration will work with the student and student's family to determine the best way to repair or replace damaged property.
<b>Stealing</b>	Students will return or replace stolen items.
<b>Cheating, Plagiarism</b>	Administration and teachers will have a discussion about the personal consequences related to cheating and plagiarism. Students will be required to give up free time to redo assignments.
<b>Spitting, Hitting, Biting</b>	Students will be separated from victims immediately. If appropriate, students will have a discussion with the school nurse about the related health consequences for these behaviors.
<b>Obscene Gestures, Swearing</b>	Students will discuss how inappropriate gestures and language are offensive to others.

The following behaviors may require time after school or community service. The most serious infractions will involve suspensions as determined by school administration. All of these behaviors will include a conference with the Parent/Caregiver. Repeated offenses may include community service, written apologies, or written behavior agreements.

<b>Level Four Behaviors</b>	<b>Logical Consequences</b>
Physical Altercations, Causing Injury	Students will be separated from victims immediately. A behavior agreement will be written to prevent further altercations. In some cases, the school resource officer will have a discussion with the family.
<b>Using discriminatory comments regarding one's race, color, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or homelessness.</b>	Students will participate in lessons to support understanding of diversity and inclusion. Lessons may include book studies or role plays to reinforce an understanding of the effects of these comments. Harassment and bullying behaviors will be investigated by administration with consequences outlined in the Westford Public Schools bullying prevention and intervention plan.
<b>Skiping School or Leaving School Grounds</b>	Students will have a conversation with a school resource officer about school attendance and safety.
<b>Striking an Adult</b>	Students will be removed from the situation immediately. A consequence will then be determined by administration in consultation with the Parent/Caregiver. A behavior agreement will be written to prevent further altercations.

Possession of a dangerous weapon or controlled substance could lead to expulsion per School Committee [P5318](#).

Bus incidents may result in suspensions from the bus as outlined in the elementary handbook. See suspension guidelines below.

Students are expected to abide by the acceptable use policy for internet use and technology as outlined in the elementary handbook. Violations of this policy will include a loss of technology privileges as determined by administration.

## **Suspension Guidelines**

1. In-school suspension: The student is allowed to attend school, but is suspended from all classes and activities during the designated suspension.
2. Out of school suspensions including short-term and long-term suspensions:
  - Notice that a serious offense has occurred.
  - The administrators and the student will discuss the events leading to the offense.
  - The school superintendent will be called and the Parent/Caregiver notified. A Parent/Caregiver conference will be scheduled to discuss the decision.
  - The Westford School Committee will be alerted when a child receives a third short-term and long-term suspension. This may result in a review of the case by the School Committee with Parent/Caregiver present. Long-term suspension for severe or egregious violations of school rules may, in some instances result in a long-term suspension or exclusion from school.
  - Prior to the imposition of any long-term suspension of more than ten consecutive school days, the student will be provided with written notice of a formal hearing and shall be provided with the opportunity to present evidence in the student's defense.
  - An administrator's decision to impose a long-term suspension may be appealed to the Superintendent of Schools. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services. Students who have been found to have a disability that impacts upon a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act are, generally, also 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 exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year.
3. Expulsion occurs under limited circumstances pursuant to state law.

## **DISCIPLINARY DUE PROCESS**

Suspensions and expulsions of students shall be imposed in compliance with constitutional, statutory, and regulatory requirements, including M.G.L. c. 76, §17; M.G.L. c. 76, §21; M.G.L. c. 71, §37H; M.G.L. c. 71, §37H 1/2; and M.G.L. c. 71, §37H 3/4; and 603 CMR 53.00..

Each incident will be considered individually, and consideration may be given to the number of offenses, type, and seriousness of the offense. The Principal has the authority to exercise discretion in deciding the consequences for a student who has violated disciplinary rules. The Principal shall first consider ways to re-engage the student offender in the learning process, and shall avoid using long-term suspension until other remedies and consequences have been tried. Other remedies may include: mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports.

Certain breaches of conduct are so serious that the Principal may long-term suspend or expel a student under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H ½. These include:

- Possession of a dangerous weapon while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event
- Possession of a controlled substance while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event
- An assault on a School Administrator, teacher, teacher's aide, or other staff person
- A felony charge or conviction

Other violations of the code of conduct will subject a student to disciplinary action up to and including mediation, detention, or suspension under the provisions of M.G.L. chapter 71, § 37H <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> and 603 CMR 53.00.

#### Opportunity to Make Academic Progress:

Westford will continue to provide educational services to any student who is suspended or expelled pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, §37H or 37H1/2, and 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 M.G.L. c. 76, § 21.

Any student who is suspended for ten (10) or less consecutive days, whether in or out of school, shall have the opportunity to make academic progress during the period of suspension, to make up assignments and earn credits missed, including but not limited to homework, quizzes, exams, papers, and other school work.

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 make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, in accordance with the school's education service plan.

### **CELL PHONE SEARCH**

School officials do not have to obtain a warrant in order to conduct a search of student property. Elementary school administration is authorized to seize the cell phone of a student based on reasonable suspicion that the possession or use of the cell phone was in violation of the law and/or school rules. Additionally, school administrators have the right to conduct a search of the contents of the cell phone when there is reasonable and individualized suspicion that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or the rules of the school.

Examples of when a search is justified at its inception include, but are not limited to, when the school receives reliable information that a student has used his or her cell phone to:

1. text during a test (suspected of cheating);
2. take a picture which is suspected to harass or bully a classmate;
3. send a picture to others or post a picture online with the intention of harassing or bullying a classmate or staff member;
4. text a threat regarding a classmate or staff member;
5. and/or where there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that a student's cell phone will contain evidence related to an immediate health or safety emergency. Even if the search of the contents of the cell phone is justified at its inception, school administrators will limit the scope of the search to only the contents of the cell phone that are reasonably related to the objectives of the search. This means that the search will be limited to those areas of the cell phone that could contain the evidence sought. Additionally, the search of the contents of the cell phone will not be excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the alleged infraction.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Cell phones and other electronic devices may be confiscated if used in school without the permission of a teacher or administrator. A Parent/Caregiver may be asked to retrieve the device.

## **PLAYGROUND**

The playground is a place to have fun. There is always at least one adult outside supervising. Teachers will talk with students about the rules for their play area and playground rules are reviewed in each classroom.

*\*Please note school playgrounds are closed to the public during school hours.*

The following are general guidelines:

1. Students are to report all injuries to the nearest adult.
2. The following types of games are encouraged: Kickball, Basketball, Four Squares, Relay Games, and Soccer
3. Good sportsmanship helps all to enjoy the recess period.
4. Students must ask permission to enter the building before the end of recess.
5. All trash must be thrown in a barrel, in order to maintain the beauty and safety of our playgrounds.
6. Appropriate footwear is required to play on all playground surfaces and structures.
7. The following playground behaviors are not allowed:
  - Fighting, shoving, tripping or knocking others down
  - Running near playground equipment
  - Tackle games
  - Jumping off or standing on swings, or improperly using playground structures or equipment
  - Sitting or standing on parallel bars
  - Standing or walking up slides
  - Profanity or name-calling
  - Removing other's hats and gloves or taking other's property.
  - Winter: Throwing snowballs, sliding on icy patches or playing on snow banks adjacent to driveways or roads.

## **OUTDOOR RECESS/ACTIVITIES**

It is important to dress appropriately for outside activities/recess. Outdoor activities/recess is held whenever possible except in inclement weather or when the outside temperature exceeds 90°F or is below 20°F, which includes humidity and wind chill factors. Please note that other variables, which may be unique to each school, are also considered when making decisions regarding indoor versus outdoor recess. Any child not well enough to be outdoors for recess during acceptable weather conditions should remain at home unless we have a communication from the child's physician recommending that he/she remain in the building. Playground boundaries are established for all play areas. In addition to staying within the assigned area, children must also stay within sight of the playground supervisor. The final decision as to outdoor recess/activities will be at the discretion of the building administrator.

## **INDOOR RECESS**

When indoor recess is announced, the teacher will suggest activities that children can enjoy.

1. Students are to remain in designated areas and cooperate with the teacher or supervisor.
2. Running around the room and loud noises are unacceptable behaviors.

## **CARE OF THE BUILDING**

To help maintain a clean and attractive school, students should follow these simple rules:

1. Student desks, chairs and lockers are school property and are to be kept clean and unmarked.
2. Throw trash daily in a wastebasket or recycling container.
3. Gum chewing is not permitted in the building unless otherwise required.

## **BICYCLES / SKATEBOARDS / SCOOTERS**

Riding a bike/skateboard/scooter to school is a privilege that has a responsibility for the rider's safety and the safety of others. Parent/Caregiver will decide if a student is ready for that privilege.

### **Bicycle/Skateboard/Scooter Rules**

1. Bikes/skateboards/scooters are to be walked in the schoolyard coming to school and going home. The school driveway is too busy for riding bicycles, skateboards or scooters.
2. Immediately upon arrival at school, bicycles are to be parked in the rack or other designated places.
3. All bicycles are to be locked. The school is not responsible for any bikes, scooters or skateboards lost.
4. Students riding bicycles, scooters or skateboards to school are dismissed with riders and pick-ups.
5. Students are to ride on the right side of the road at all times.
6. Helmets are required.

Any student not following these and other rules for bicycle safety may lose their privilege to ride a bicycle, scooter or skateboard to school.

## **THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT ALLOWED IN SCHOOL**

- Jackknives, weapons or any dangerous objects
- Matches and lighters
- Toys which resemble weapons
- Any other objects that might be a safety concern in a large group situation
- Handheld electronic devices such as eReaders, Gameboys, iPads, iPods, cameras, Smart Watches and any other electronic devices
- Making calls or texts on any personal mobile device are not permitted during the school day
- Students shall not sell materials or products such as stickers, trading cards, or other items, for private gain in school buildings, on school property, or the bus.
- Bats, lacrosse sticks, hard balls, or other sports equipment that may pose a danger
- Toys that become a distraction may be banned by the administration
- Pets with the exception of guide animals

## **DRESS CODE**

Students are expected to meet reasonable standards with regards to health, safety, and cleanliness, and to dress in a way that is appropriate for the learning environment. Students shall have the right to express themselves through their dress and appearance choices, and should also respect the school district's intent to sustain an inclusive learning community that supports a diverse range of identities.

The district is responsible for ensuring that student dress choices do not interfere with the health and safety of any student, do not create a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student, and do not cause any disruption or disorder within the school.

School staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and equitably, and in a manner that respects the privacy, comfort, and well-being of the student. Dress code enforcement should not reinforce or increase marginalization of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, body maturity, or body type/size. Conversations about dress choice should be a collaborative discussion with the student to achieve an appropriate and satisfactory solution. If necessary, the student's parents/caregivers may be contacted to help address the issue. Should a satisfactory solution not be



reached, decisions regarding the safety, respect, or disruption of the learning environment will be made by the building principal.

### **Students Shall Not Wear:**

- clothing depicting hate speech, profanity, pornography, violent images or language
- clothing with images or language depicting drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other controlled substances
- clothing or accessories that could be considered dangerous, used as weapons, or could cause damage to school property
- hats or hoods of any type in school during school hours\*
- outdoor clothing, such as winter coats, should be removed in school\*

*\*Individual accommodations may be made based on medical, religious, or sensory needs.*

### **Students Shall Wear:**

Clothing and footwear appropriate for the learning environment or activity. More specific dress student dress guidelines, which shall be inclusive, gender neutral and accessible to all students may be provided for certain school activities, including but not limited to:

- Wellness classes
- School-sponsored special events, performances, and ceremonies
- Field trips
- Extra-curricular activities and clubs
- Athletics
- Science labs
- Recess/playgrounds

## **STUDENT INTERACTION**

During the school year students may encounter conflict with other children. The levels of student conflict ranges from difference of opinion, arguing and perhaps inappropriate verbal or physical confrontation. Ongoing conflict is not necessarily bullying. Students experiencing behavior that violates the school Code of Conduct should tell the other child/children to stop the specific behavior. If the behavior doesn't stop the offended student should communicate this to the nearest adult, as well as their classroom teacher. School staff will determine all facts of the situation and make a decision on consequences for each student violating the Code of Conduct. Students should be encouraged to communicate directly with adults at school when concerned about how others are treating them. If children communicate information about Code of Conduct violations to a Parent/Caregiver, rather than school staff, the respective Parent/Caregiver should contact the classroom teacher. All conflict isn't necessarily a Code of Conduct infraction. Students witnessing violations of the Code of Conduct have a responsibility of reporting this behavior to the nearest adult.

In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed, a principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense; consider ways to re-engage the student in learning; and avoid using long-term suspension from school as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. Alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

## **BULLYING**

Refer to School Committee P[5304](#)

Generally, 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. Examples of bullying are: hitting or kicking; name calling or threatening or leaving friends out of activities just to hurt their

feelings. Please see the legal definition of bullying, and information about filing a report of bullying, in the WPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, below.

## **WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN**

The Westford Public Schools (WPS) created the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, “the Plan” required under M.G.L. c.71, §37O in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents/caregivers. The Plan is posted on the district [website](#).

The Westford Public Schools’ Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying. The district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The principal or his/her designee is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

The district is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process. We understand that members of certain student groups, such as students with disabilities, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, and homeless students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. The district will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

We understand that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or Parent/Caregiver status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics. The district will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target’s sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and Parent/Caregiver involvement.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c.71, §37O, as noted below:

**Bullying**, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, §37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;

- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

**Cyberbullying** - bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c.71, §37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying. Please refer to the district's Acceptable Use Policy.

**Hostile environment** - as defined in M.G.L. c.71, §37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

**Perpetrator** - is a student or member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, who engages in bullying or retaliation.

**Retaliation** - is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student or staff person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

**Staff includes**, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

**Target**, is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

## PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:

- i. on school grounds and 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
- ii. at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited. As stated in M.G.L. c.71, §37O, nothing in the Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

### Reporting bullying or retaliation

The district expects students, Parent/Caregiver, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of suspected bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or assistant principal. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Reports may be made orally or in writing. The "WPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form" has been developed for student, Parent/Caregiver or other non-school or district staff to report incidents of suspected bullying. This form can be obtained in every school office or it can be [printed](#). Use of the "WPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form" is not required as a

condition of making a report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or assistant principal.

### **Determinations**

With the principal's receipt of the complaint of bullying or retaliation, the principal or his/her designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or his/her designee will determine what remedial action may be required, if any, and determine what responsive and/or disciplinary actions will be taken. The principal's finding and determinations shall be documented in writing. All notices to the Parent/Caregiver must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or his/her designee cannot report specific information to the target's Parent/Caregiver about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

**Taking Disciplinary Action** If the principal or his/her designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or his/her designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct. Disciplinary sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension or expulsion from school. Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or his/her designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or his/her designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or his/her designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately. The principal or his/her designee will monitor the effectiveness of any such interventions employed and, where appropriate, recommend alternative or supplemental interventions.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, gender identity, homelessness, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies. In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c.71, §37H, §37H1/2, or 37H3/46, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

### **HARASSMENT**

Refer to Westford Public Schools Policy [5303](#)

The goal of the Westford Public Schools is to maintain a positive school atmosphere conducive to learning. All conduct and communication will be free from all forms of harassment due to race, sex, sexual orientation, color, religion, age, gender identity, homelessness, national origin, and disability. It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the Westford Public Schools to harass another person, student or staff member, through

conduct or communications. This policy applies to any member of the Westford Public Schools including but not limited to students, staff, outside contractors, and volunteers.

## **ELECTRONIC CONDUCT/HARASSMENT**

All restrictions against inappropriate language, conduct, and/or harassment apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on web pages. No images of school personnel or facsimiles may be posted online without written consent of the individual. Recording, videoing or photographing students or staff without permission is prohibited.

## **STUDENT EXPULSION**

Refer to Westford Public Schools Policy [5314](#)

**Removal for Ten (10) or Less Consecutive Days:** Any student who is suspended for ten (10) or less consecutive days, whether in or out of school, shall have the opportunity to make academic progress during the period of suspension, to make up assignments and earn credits missed, including but not limited to homework, quizzes, exams, papers, and other school work.

**Removal for More than Ten (10) Consecutive Days:** 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 make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, in accordance with the school's education service plan.

**Expulsion:** The removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) consecutive school days.

**In-School Suspension:** The removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

**Short-Term Suspension:** The removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. A principal may, in his or her discretion, allow a student to serve a short-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

**Long-Term Suspension:** 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. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense in subsections (a) or (b) of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H ½, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety (90) school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

**Written Notice:** Written correspondence sent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, or email to an address provided by the Parent/Caregiver for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the Parent/Caregiver.

**Principal:** The primary administrator of the school or the Principal's designee for disciplinary purposes.

## **CRISIS INTERVENTION**

If, in the opinion of Administration, guidance personnel, or the Student Assistance Team, a student is judged to be at-risk of harming himself/herself or others, the following will occur:

1. The student's Parent/Caregiver will be notified of the concern.
2. The Parent/Caregiver will be asked to pick up their son/daughter from school.
3. The school may request that the Parent/Caregiver submit a written statement from an outside licensed mental health professional indicating that they have evaluated the student and find that the student is safe to return to school.
4. Upon their return, school personnel will continue to monitor and work with the student.

**NOTE:** During the period that the student is being evaluated, the student's daily absences will be excused.

## **WESTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

A relationship of communication exists between Westford Public Schools and the Westford Police Department in conjunction with the Middlesex District Attorney's Community-Based Justice Program to the extent of informing the administration when one of its students is involved in any incident or potential incident that would jeopardize the well-being of students, faculty, or individuals within the greater school community. Should such an incident or potential incident occur, the Administration will receive notice from one of the above mentioned agencies which may result in communication between the student and administration. The outcome of this meeting may result in disciplinary action which could affect participation in school-related events.

## **OTHER INFORMATION & REGULATIONS**

### **AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Students who remain in the building after school must be under the supervision of a faculty/staff member. Students in any other area of the building, and not supervised, may be subject to disciplinary actions.

### **SCHOOL HEALTH**

Students should report to the nurse for health emergencies, illness assessment, first aid/injuries, emotional support, medication administration, health screenings and physicals, health record updates, and any health-related concerns. If the nurse is not in the Clinic, the student should report to the Main Office. For students who are dismissed for health related reasons, the nurse will contact the Parent/Caregiver listed on the student emergency card. The student will remain in the clinic until the Parent/Caregiver arrives at the school.

### **MEDICATION INFORMATION**

- According to WPS Policy 5503, the school nurse is the only person allowed to administer medication to students in the Westford Public Schools. EpiPens and inhalers may be administered by teachers on field trips.
- If a prescription medication is to be given at school, it must be in the original pharmacy bottle with the prescription label attached and the Medication Administration Plan must be completed. The pharmacy will provide you with a 'school bottle'
- Medications are kept in the Nurses' Clinic with the exception of emergency medications (e.g. inhalers, EpiPens and glucagon) that students carry.

- If your child takes regular medication outside of school, it is suggested you contact the school nurse.
- If your child has an allergy requiring an EpiPen, please contact the nurse to develop an Emergency Health Care Plan (these can be found on the WPS website).
- Parent/Caregiver should retrieve medications at the end of the school year because all medications will be destroyed on the last day of school.
- Students are not allowed to carry any prescription medicine unless granted permission by the school nurse.

## **PHYSICALS AND IMMUNIZATIONS**

**Physicals:** Westford Public School regulations require that students have up to date physical examinations in kindergarten and 3rd grade. Documentation of the physical (Including height, weight and blood pressure) should be given/mailed to the school clinic. Information related to physical examinations are required for new students.

**Immunizations:** Students must meet current Massachusetts Department of Public Health immunization requirements. School health records are reviewed periodically to determine the immunization status of each student. Verification of immunizations should be submitted to the school nurse to update the student's health record.

## **MANDATED REPORTING**

All professional staff are informed annually of their obligations to report cases of child abuse and neglect as specified in M.G.L. Chapter 119, §51A-51F and M.G.L. Chapter 71, §37L.

## **MEDICAL SCREENINGS**

Postural screenings are done on an opt-in basis. Vision screenings are completed in grades K-5. Hearing screenings are completed in grades K-3. Height & weight screenings are completed in grade 4. Parent/Caregiver will be notified of screening results by letter or telephone only if the student has failed a screening exam or requires further care from their health care provider. Findings of these referrals for follow-up should be returned to school to update a student's health record.

## **MEDICAL EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL**

A student may be dismissed or excluded from school for any of the following:

- Temperature over 100.4° (oral temperature)
- Disruptive cough
- Suspected infection of eye, ears, nose, throat, skin, scalp
- Severe abdominal pain or headache
- Suspected communicable disease
- Suspected pediculosis (live head lice)
- Suspected fractures or any severe or disabling injury
- Questionable need for sutures
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Head injury
- Immunizations which are not up to date
- Antibiotic therapy started less than twenty four (24) hours before returning to school
- Students diagnosed with Strep throat should be excluded from school until:
  - a. Fever free x 24 hrs (**without** fever reducing medicine such as Advil, ibuprofen, Tylenol, etc.)

- b. Well appearing
- c. On antibiotics x 12 hrs by start of school day

### **EMERGENCY CARDS**

Emergency cards are distributed to all students on the first day of school. These cards should be completed by the Parent/Caregiver. Complete information is necessary to ensure your child's health and safety while at school. All information is confidential and must be updated if there are any changes.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Additionally, all medical information and/or life threatening allergy/medication pertaining to the student must be current in the Nurses' Clinic.

### **FIRE ALARMS**

A fire alarm is a serious matter of student safety. All must follow the directions which are posted in each room. Students must leave the building immediately in an orderly fashion. Students will return to class once cleared to enter the building. All students will walk beyond the driveways and wait. All fire drills are timed to assess the evacuation of the building.

## **HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

All fifth graders will have an opportunity to participate in a Human Growth and Development Unit. The goal is to help students recognize why and how their bodies are changing, as well as discuss the beginning stages of puberty. There will be information about the reproductive system, emotional maturity, and healthy decision-making regarding nutrition and hygiene. Permission from a Parent/Caregiver is necessary to participate. M.G.L. c. 71, § 32A notes that Parent/Caregiver must be provided an "opt-out" provision for courses that focus on human sexual education, the biological mechanics of human reproduction and sexual development, or human sexuality issues. Parent/Caregivers wishing to review curricula and/or exempt their child/children from instruction of these topics must contact the building Principal in writing. A Parent/Caregiver who is dissatisfied with a decision of the principal concerning notice, access to instructional materials, or exemption for a student under this policy may send a written request to the superintendent for review of the issue. The superintendent will review the issue and give the Parent/Caregiver a timely written decision.

### **LOCKERS**

In accordance with School Committee [P5310](#).

Each student is assigned a locker and is responsible for its maintenance and condition. The school cannot be responsible for lost or stolen articles in view of the fact that each student has an individually assigned locker. School lockers are school property and may be searched by school authorities at any time. Students do not have an expectation of privacy in their school lockers. The Parent/Caregiver of any student involved in a locker search will be notified of the locker search.

## **MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE ACT**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act requires that schools immediately enroll homeless students in school, even if they do not have the documents usually required for enrollment, such as school records, medical records or proof of residency, as long as the student has been properly immunized. Information on lead screenings as well as immunization records may be transferred over the phone. Parent/Caregiver intending to register students who are homeless should be aware of the following guidelines:



1. Homeless students have a right to either remain in their school of origin or to attend school where they are temporarily residing.
2. Children who move from a homeless situation into a permanent residence during the course of a school year have the right to stay in the school they were attending while they were temporarily homeless. If the child or youth continues his or her education in the school of origin but begins living in an area served by another school district, the school district of origin and the school district in which the homeless child or youth is living must agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child or youth with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the school districts cannot agree upon a method, the responsibility and costs for transportation are to be shared equally.
3. Students who choose to enroll in school where they are temporarily residing must be enrolled immediately, even if they do not bring the records usually required for enrollment with them.

If a homeless student arrives without records, the school district's designated Homeless Education Liaison will assist the family and contact the previously attended school system to obtain the required records.

A child who is homeless and attending any school served by the local educational agency is eligible for Title I services and the Free and Reduced Lunch Program.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines “homeless children and youths” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes—

- Children and youths who are:
  - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled-up”);
  - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
  - abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

Additional information is available at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/mv/>

## **STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the educational stability of students in foster care and their equal access to the same free and appropriate public education through high school graduation as provided to other students as required by law. Educational stability has a lasting impact on students' academic achievement and wellbeing, and the Westford Public Schools are committed to supporting district and community efforts to ensure that students in foster care have access to high-quality, stable educational experiences.

The law requires that foster care students continue to attend their school of origin, unless after a collaborative decision-making process it is determined to be in the student's best interest to enroll in and attend school in the district in which a foster care provider or facility is located (if different). The law also requires that when it is not in the student's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the student is immediately enrolled and attending in a new school district, even if records normally required for enrollment cannot be quickly produced. Additionally, the law requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF), The Department of Elementary and Secondary

Education (DESE), and the school district to designate points of contact; and also that the district collaborate with DCF and other school district to ensure that students will receive transportation to the school of origin if needed.

### **Best Interest Determination**

Decisions about whether a student in foster care should continue to attend the school of origin should be made collaboratively by DCF, the student (as appropriate), the student's family and/or foster family (and if different, the person authorized to make educational decisions on behalf of the student), the school and district of origin, and (when different) the local district where the student is placed. Best interest determinations should focus on the needs of each individual student and take into account a variety of factors. Every effort should be made to reach agreement regarding the appropriate school placement of a student in foster care. However, if there is disagreement regarding school placement for a student in foster care, DCF will finalize the best interest determination.

The district can seek review of DCF's decision by utilizing a Foster Care School Selection Dispute Resolution Process established by DESE and DCF. Decisions made through this process are not subject to review. Under the law, to promote educational stability, students should continue to attend their schools of origin while best interest determinations are being made.

### **Transportation**

The district of origin must collaborate with DCF on how transportation will be provided and arranged to ensure that students in foster care who need transportation to remain in their school of origin will receive such transportation while they are in foster care.

Transportation options may include using Title I funds, establishing regional collaboration districts, coordinating with existing routes for transportation, seeking help from foster parents/caregiver(s), etc. Absent other agreements between the district and DCF, the district of origin is responsible for providing transportation to and from the school of origin.

### **Immediate Enrollment**

If it is in the best interest of a student in foster care to leave the school of origin, the student must be enrolled in school in the local school district immediately. To minimize disruption of the student's education, the law requires the district to enroll the student in a new school right away, without waiting to receive the typical student enrollment documentation (other than emergency contact information). The enrolling school must immediately contact the child's school and district of origin to obtain the relevant records and documentation, and the school and district of origin should immediately transfer those records. To facilitate enrollment, DCF representatives will present the district with a form that indicates the student is in foster care, along with their state agency identification badge, when enrolling students.

## **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

Physical restraint is defined as direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort, and shall be prohibited except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious physical harm to self or others, and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances. The Westford Public Schools complies with the requirements of Massachusetts regulations governing the use and reporting of physical restraint in schools. 603 CMR 46.00.

Physical restraint shall not be used: (a) as a means of discipline or punishment; (b) when the student cannot be safely restrained because it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting; (c) as a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a public education program rule

or staff directive, or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm; or (d) as a standard response for any individual student.

No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) may include use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior. Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort. 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.

Nothing in Westford Public Schools policy, or the applicable regulations, prohibits: (a) the right of any individual to report to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual; (b) law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or other person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or (c) the exercise of an individual's responsibilities as a mandated reporter pursuant to MGL c. 119, § 51A.

## SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Some students with disabilities require specialized instruction and/or supportive services to help them make effective progress in school. These services can include, but are not limited to, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, specialized instruction, or placement in a special classroom. Parent/Caregiver or teachers may refer students they are concerned about to the Pupil Services Office. Within five (5) school days of such a referral, a consent form authorizing an evaluation of the student will be forwarded to the parents/caregiver(s). Upon receipt of the parents/caregiver(s)' consent, an evaluation will be conducted and a Team meeting will be held to determine if the student is eligible for special education services. If the student is found eligible for special education services, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) identifying the necessary services.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . . ." Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II) is a federal law that applies to public entities, including the conforming amendment to Section 504 that affects the meaning of a disability under Section 504.

The Section 504 regulations require a school district to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Under Section 504, a FAPE consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.

### COMPLAINTS –

Individuals who have complaints regarding the District's compliance with Section 504 can bring suit in federal district court against the District or persons in their individual capacity: U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights 5 Post Office Square, 8 <sup>th</sup> Floor Boston, MA 02118.	In regard to concerns related to the identification, evaluation, and placement of students with disabilities, parents/caregivers can make a hearing request with the:  Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals 14 Summer Street, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Malden, MA 02148.	Employees can also file a complaint with the:  Equal Employment Opportunity Commission John F. Kennedy Federal Building 475 Government Center Boston, MA 02203.
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If you have any questions regarding this notice, or would like more information and/or a copy of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Student Record Regulations, please contact the building

principal.

## **TEXTBOOKS & EQUIPMENT**

Students will be responsible for all textbooks and equipment issued by the school. Students will be charged a replacement fee for all lost or damaged books or equipment. A replacement for a lost and/or stolen textbook or piece of equipment will be issued upon full payment for the original.

## **SCHOOL BUSES**

### **School Bus Guidelines**

So that all children enjoy a safe ride to and from school, the following guidelines are in place:

1. Students riding the bus to and/or from school must display a bus pass.
2. The “code of conduct” for your school will apply to students while on the bus.
3. The bus driver will give a signal to students to board the bus after it comes to a complete stop.
4. Students will board and leave the bus in a single file and in an orderly manner.
5. If the student misses the bus, do not drive after the bus. In this situation, please drive the student to school. To ensure the safety of all children, adults should not board the bus.
6. While on the bus, students should keep body parts and objects inside the bus. Throwing items inside the bus is strictly prohibited.
7. Damaging the bus, smoking, or the use of matches will result in a severe consequence determined by the school administrator.
8. Food and drinks are not allowed on the bus.
9. Only the driver and his or her designee will open bus windows.
10. Students will not open the emergency door for other than emergency reasons as directed by the bus driver.
11. Students should have written permission to leave the bus at bus stops other than the one for their neighborhood. The note should be given to the bus driver for verification.
12. Talking between the driver and any passenger should be kept to a minimum,

### **Bus Stop Policy**

The Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration is responsible for establishing proper standards of safety in the operation of buses and shall ensure their enforcement by the bus contractor.

The Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration is responsible for establishing bus schedules, routes, and stops in cooperation with the bus contractor.

Authorized bus stops shall be located in places where students may be loaded and unloaded, cross streets and roads, and safely await the arrival of the buses.

### **Criteria Used to Evaluate Bus Stop Safety**

Evaluation of bus stop safety is done by the Assistant Superintendent, safety officers from the police and fire departments, and the bus company.

When a Parent/Caregiver requests a change in the assigned bus stop, the following safety review criteria is used to evaluate the safety of a bus stop:

1. Site lines of the traffic from both directions in approaching the stop.
2. Speed limit and traffic conditions at the location of the bus stop.
3. Hills and turns that impede traffic visibility of the stop and proximity to the bus stop.

4. Ability of a school bus to navigate in an area.
5. Width of a road
6. Grade level (age) of students.
7. Ability of the school bus to safely pull out of a side street onto a main road.
8. Time constraints.
9. Number of students involved at a bus stop.
10. Any other unique conditions.

All requests to change a bus stop must be in writing and must include the reason for making the request. Send this written request to the Assistant Superintendent who will make the final decision after consultation with safety officers and the bus company.

## BUS DISCIPLINE POLICY

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** Referral for misbehavior on the school bus will result in a student conference with the building administrator. At that time, appropriate disciplinary action will be administered and Parent/Caregiver will be notified regarding each written report from the driver.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** May result in a bus suspension of up to three (3) days

**3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:** May result in a bus suspension of up to five (5) days

**4<sup>th</sup> Offense:** Chronic or severe behavior may result in permanent bus suspension or loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year. The Superintendent of Schools will be notified.

## Motor Vehicle Idling

Operators of any bus or motor vehicle are prohibited from and may be fined for prolonged idling of said vehicle on school grounds pursuant to M.G.L. c. 90, § 16B.

## FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL POLICIES

### CH. 622/TITLE IX (EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY)

In accordance with the regulation of Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, all courses of study, extracurricular activities, services, and facilities offered by the school are available without regard to race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

Furthermore in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, United States of America, no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity.

Under both Chapter 622 and Title IX provision for grievance procedures is made. Any student, Parent/Caregiver, or other person or group who believes that these regulations have been or are being violated, may so notify the Principal, Superintendent of Schools, and Chapter 622/Title IX Coordinator. The School Department will respond promptly, but no later than 30 days, in writing to the party filing the grievance. Should a non-compliance be found, procedures for making changes will be immediately initiated both to correct the non-compliance and to provide particular remedies to the person or group affected.

Individuals who have complaints regarding the District's compliance with Section 504 can bring suit in federal district court against the District or persons in their individual capacity:	At any stage in the complaint process, the complainant has the right to file formal complaints with the:  Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination One Ashburton Place, Sixth Floor, Room 601 Boston, MA 02108,	For complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability the complainant may also file a complaint with the with the:  Equal Employment Opportunity Commission John F. Kennedy Federal Building
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U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights 5 Post Office Square, 8 <sup>th</sup> Floor Boston, MA 02118. (617) 289-0111	(617) 727-3990  In regard to concerns related to the identification, evaluation, and placement of students with disabilities, parents/caregivers can make a hearing request with the:  Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148 617) 338-3300.	475 Government Center Boston, MA 02203. (617) 565-3200.
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## TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972

The Westford Public Schools does not tolerate discrimination against students, Parents/Caregivers, employees or the general public on the basis of sex. The Westford Public Schools is also committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on sex, including harassment based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status. The Westford Public Schools' policy of nondiscrimination extends 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 Westford or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of sex.

### How to Report Sexual Harassment

Individuals are encouraged to report allegations of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator(s) identified below or the Principal. Any report of sexual harassment, as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, will be responded to promptly in accordance with the *District's Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures*, available: [Here](#).

Reports of discriminatory harassment not constituting sexual harassment as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, will be initially addressed through the *District's Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure* and may, if dismissed under that procedure, be investigated in accordance with the *District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedures*, available: [Here](#).

Upon receipt of a report of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will: (1) promptly and confidentially contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures; (2) inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint; (3) consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures; (4) if the school district does not provide the complainant with supportive measures, document the reasons why such response was reasonable; and (5) explain to the complainant the process for filing a Title IX Formal Complaint.

Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be directed to the District's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

The District's Title IX Coordinator is:

Dr. Kerry Clery, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
23 Depot Street, Westford, MA 01886  
978-692-5560 [kclery@westfordk12.us](mailto:kclery@westfordk12.us)

## TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NONCONFORMING STUDENT

*Westford Public Schools Policy P5325 – Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Student*\_\_\_\_\_

The Westford Public Schools strives to provide a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment in which all

students can thrive and succeed in its schools. The Westford Public Schools prohibits discrimination (see policy P5303) on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation and ensures that all students have equal rights of access and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, privileges, and courses of study.

## **NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)**

PPRA affords Parent/Caregiver certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

1. **Consent** before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE): political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's Parent/Caregiver; mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family; sex behavior or attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers; religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or Parent/Caregiver; or income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
2. **Receive notice** and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following: any other protected information survey, regardless of funding; any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law; and activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
3. **Inspect**, upon request and before administration or use: protected information surveys of students; instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum. These rights transfer from the Parent/Caregiver to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under state law.

The Westford Public Schools will/has develop(ed) and adopt(ed) policies, in consultation with Parent/Caregiver, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The District will directly notify Parent/Caregiver of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The District will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, Parent/Caregiver of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the Parent/Caregiver to opt his or her child out of participation in the specific activity or survey. The District will make this notification to the Parent/Caregiver at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, Parent/Caregiver will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parent/Caregiver will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys.

Specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement include: the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution; the administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by DOE; and any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as

described above. Parent/Caregiver who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-5901.

### **MGL CHAPTER 269, SEC. 10 (WEAPONS POLICY)**

It is illegal to have a weapon in school or on school property. Students who are in possession of a weapon or a look alike risk expulsion from school. In all cases, authorities will be notified, the student will be immediately suspended from school, and an expulsion hearing will be held. Weapons are defined as guns, knives, bows, arrows, darts, or any other objects, which in the opinion of the administration may cause harm to you or others.

Whoever not being a law enforcement officer, and notwithstanding any license obtained by him under the provisions of Chapter 140, carries on his person a firearm as hereinafter defined, loaded or unloaded, in any building or on the grounds of any secondary school, college, or university without the written authorization of the Board or Officer in charge of such secondary school, college, or university shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000 or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. For the purpose of this paragraph, "firearm" shall mean any pistol, revolver, rifle, or smoothbore arm from which a shot, bullet, or pellet can be discharged by whatever means.

### **HARASSMENT POLICY**

*In accordance with the School Committee [P5303](#):*

The School Committee is committed to maintaining a work and educational environment free from all forms of harassing conduct. Harassment including but not limited to, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sex, gender identity, creed, marital status, sexual orientation or disability will not be tolerated in the Westford Public Schools. All employees, students, contracted vendors, and other members of the school community will conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect, dignity, courtesy, and fair treatment for all individuals while on school grounds, school property, or property within the jurisdiction of the school district, school busses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

Harassment means conduct of a verbal or physical nature which is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb, or trouble any person when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's work or education or of an individual's participation in school programs or activities.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning or working environment.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse
2. Unsolicited remarks or remarks of a demeaning nature
3. Gestures or physical contact
4. Displays or circulation of written materials or pictures derogatory to either gender or derogatory to racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation or disability groups.
5. Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievement, or other school matters.
6. Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at an individual.



Gender Harassment (Sexual Harassment) includes, but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature as listed below:

1. Submission is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's participation in school programs or activities.
2. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for work or educational decisions affecting such individuals.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working/educational environment.

Each administrator shall be responsible within their school or office for promoting an understanding of harassment and assuring compliance with state and federal laws, and with School Committee policy and regulations governing harassment.

Violations will be cause for disciplinary action up to termination or expulsion.

Retaliation in any form against any person who has filed a complaint relating to harassment will not be tolerated. No individual will be subject to any form of coercion, intimidation, retaliation or discrimination for filing a report of harassment. The consequences for retaliation will be the same as for harassment. False accusations made in bad faith will be subject to the same disciplinary action as the harassment itself.

Following disclosure by a student of an incident involving student-to-student harassment, **one or more** of the following may occur after investigation by an appropriate responder.

- A letter identifying the offending behavior may be written and given to the offender. This is not a disciplinary action. The letter is not kept on file in the Principal's Office. However, it is retained by the Guidance Director. If harassment described by the student involves extreme physical assault, a letter response would not be appropriate, and the matter would be turned over to an administrator for more direct attention and disciplinary action.
- Notification of Parent/Caregiver when disciplinary action is not required may vary depending on the school level.
- Student may be disciplined.

<p>Individuals who have complaints regarding the District's compliance with Section 504 can bring suit in federal district court against the District or persons in their individual capacity:</p> <p>U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights 5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Boston, MA 02118. (617) 289-0111</p>	<p>At any stage in the complaint process, the complainant has the right to file formal complaints with the:</p> <p>Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination One Ashburton Place, Sixth Floor, Room 601 Boston, MA 02108, (617) 727-3990</p> <p>In regard to concerns related to the identification, evaluation, and placement of students with disabilities, parents/caregivers can make a hearing request with the:</p> <p>Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148 617) 338-3300.</p>	<p>Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Bureau of Special Education Appeals 14 Summer Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Malden, MA 02148; (617) 626-7200.</p> <p>For complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability the complainant may also file a complaint with the with the:</p> <p>Equal Employment Opportunity Commission John F. Kennedy Federal Building 475 Government Center Boston, MA 02203. (617) 565-3200.</p>
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If students feel that they are being harassed by adult personnel, they are encouraged to report the incident to a counselor and/or administrator. Appropriate action will be taken in all instances.

**Discipline:** The following disciplinary actions for a substantiated charge against students that requires action beyond the "letter writing level" may result in the following:

- Student(s) may be suspended.
- Student(s) may be referred to the Superintendent or School Committee
- Police or court action may be initiated.

## **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

*In accordance with the School Committee [P6201](#):*

### **Program Definition**

The homebound instruction program is designed for students who cannot attend school for a variety of medical or emotional factors substantiated by a qualified healthcare provider. The program may be short or long term. The program designed for each student is determined by their educational plan and consists primarily of academic tasks which are coordinated by the regular / special education teacher(s) and the home instruction teacher.

**Program Goals** - The goals of the program are to:

1. Provide instructional support for students assigned to the Homebound Instruction Program.
2. Provide the schools and the classroom teacher(s) with periodic reports of student progress.
3. Implement the designed educational plan with the intent of returning to the regular school
4. program at the earliest possible time.

## **STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**

### **STUDENT RELEASE FOR PRINT AND ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION**

During the course of the school year, members of the school staff may photograph or videotape students participating in school activities as a way of assessing learning or documenting learning activities. News photographers and cameramen may also visit our schools to take photos or videos of students engaged in school-related activities. These photos and videos may be selected to appear in school publications such as Parent/Caregiver newsletters or student literary journals, in local newspapers, or on cable or commercial TV. In addition, written work or art work produced by students may be selected to appear in school publications or released to the media

Occasionally student work or photographs of students participating in school activities, or highlights of their school achievements may be displayed on the [Westford Public Schools website](#)

Only the student's first name and last initial will be published on school department pages. Westford Public Schools will not publish student work or photographs in print or on the Internet without the Parent/Caregiver written permission. *The School Committee recognizes three levels of publishing audiences as defined in the School Committee Policies: [P6302](#) and [P6115](#).*

### **District Acceptable Internet Use**

*In accordance with the School Committee [P6302](#):*

The Westford Public School District supports student and staff access to a variety of rich information resources. In a free and democratic society, access to information is a fundamental right of citizenship. Electronic information literacy skills are now fundamental to the preparation of citizens and future employees. Telecommunications and other new technologies are shifting the ways that information is accessed, communicated, and transferred. Access to

telecommunications enables students and staff to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards. It also allows the exchanging of messages with people throughout the world. The use of these new tools and systems brings new responsibilities as well as opportunities.

Westford Public Schools believes the teaching of cybersafety and responsible online behavior is essential in the lives of students. Therefore, safe and responsible behavior shall be explicitly taught at our schools and Parent/Caregiver are requested to reinforce this behavior at home.

Responsible use of technology helps students to achieve their personal and academic potential and become successful citizens. The district believes that cybersafety and responsible online behavior should be taught in a partnership between home and school.

### **School Support for the Safe and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies**

Westford Public Schools uses the internet and various other digital technologies as teaching and learning tools. The district views these technologies as valuable resources, but acknowledges they must be used responsibly. While the nature of the internet is such that full protection from inappropriate content can never be guaranteed, students using computers in the school must cooperate with the staff members supervising computer areas and follow the instructions for computer use in each area. The use of the Internet and district technology resources is a privilege, not a right. Violation of district rules will result in loss of network/computer privileges for a period of time commensurate with the offense. Users will also be held responsible for damage they cause and will be subject to school rules regarding damage to property. The superintendent will refer any potential illegal activities to the appropriate local authority.

**Etiquette:** Users communicating via any school digital technology shall avoid profane or other potentially offensive language. Additionally, users shall never use school computers or any other technology to convey intentionally hurtful messages.

**Online Safety:** To be safe online, students must act with caution, both at school and at home, particularly in unsupervised situations. Students shall never give out personal information, such as full name, home phone number, home address, or credit card information over the school's network. Additionally, any password issued to a user is for the personal use of the recipient only.

**Tampering:** Unauthorized tampering with computers or peripherals is forbidden, and may be dealt with as vandalism, if damage occurs.

**Publishing:** WPS recognizes the need to restrict the publication of personal information for safety reasons. To ensure security and safety of our children, the published work of K-8 students will be identified by first name and last initial, and student photos and audio recording may only be used with Parent/Caregiver permission.

The Westford Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) shall be published in the school's Student Handbooks ([P6302](#)) that have been approved by the School Committee and filed with the Department of Education in compliance with MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H and issued to students. Parent/Caregiver shall submit to the school the appropriate acknowledgement form, verifying that they have reviewed the contents of the handbook with their child. Additionally, the AUP shall be published in staff handbooks.

### **Digital Citizenship**

As we continue to infuse more technology into our learning, we want to continue to ensure our students are being appropriate and making good choices while using technology throughout the day.

- Chromebooks are for school use only and students should use them for school related work only.
- Remember to be respectful of others when online and create digital content that is appropriate and related to school use only.
- Stay focused on learning and only do tasks that are assigned by the school staff.

- Chromebooks cannot be used on the bus, during before school care or during recess.
- Students know that if they do not follow the rules, consequences may include loss of technology privileges.

## **Digital Citizenship**

### **10 Rules for Online Safety, Respectful Behavior, and Responsible Choices**

**Rule 1: Online life is real life** - I will behave respectfully online since I am communicating with real people who have feelings.

**Rule 2: Keep your identity a secret** - I will not give anyone online my private information like my age or address.

**Rule 3: Be extra careful with strangers** - I will let responsible adults in my family know who I am talking to and meeting online.

**Rule 4: Tell somebody** - I promise to tell my Parent/Caregiver and teachers if I see something bad or somebody makes me feel uncomfortable online.

**Rule 5: Protect your passwords** - I will use strong passwords and keep them in a safe place that only responsible adults in my family or I know.

**Rule 6: Be nice online** - I promise to be nice to people and respect their opinions and beliefs online.

**Rule 7: Stay focused on learning** - Do only what my teacher asks me to do online.

**Rule 8: Make responsible choices online** - I will stay off inappropriate websites that my family and teachers would not approve of it.

**Rule 9: Use digital tools respectfully and responsibly** - I will create digital content that is appropriate and related to my school assignments.

**Rule 10: Be an online upstander** - I will speak up when I know someone is not being a good digital citizen.

### **Personal Safety (Restrictions are for students only)**

1. Users of the District's Computing Environment (Users) shall not post personal contact information about themselves or other people. Students and teachers shall not post personal contact information concerning other people which includes the person's last name, address, telephone, work address.
2. Users shall not agree to meet with someone they have met online without Parent/Caregiver approval and participation.
3. Users shall promptly disclose to a teacher or other school employee any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.
4. The image and/or work of any student shall not be displayed on the District's Web site without written permission of the student and their Parent/Caregiver.

**Respect for Privacy**

1. Users shall respect the privacy of others in the District Computing Environment.
2. Users shall not attempt to learn the password, access the files or mail of other users.
3. Users shall not post private information about another person.

**Illegal Activities**

1. Users shall not attempt to gain unauthorized access to or through the District Computing Environment to any other computer system or go beyond their authorized access.
2. Users shall not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the District Computing Environment's performance or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means.
3. Users shall not use the District Computing Environment to engage in any other illegal act.

**Environment Security**

1. Users are responsible for their individual accounts and shall take precautions to prevent others from using their accounts. Under no conditions should a user provide their password to another person.
2. Users shall immediately notify the designated administrator if they identify a possible security problem.
3. Users shall follow the local site's virus protection procedures.

**Inappropriate Language, Conduct and Harassment**

All restrictions against inappropriate language, conduct and harassment apply to public messages, private messages and material posted on Web pages.

**Truthfulness and Accuracy**

Users shall not knowingly or recklessly post false or inaccurate information.

**Respecting Resource Limits**

1. Users shall limit their use of the environment to educational and professional or career development activities.
2. Users shall not post chain letters or engage in "spamming." Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.
3. The Superintendent, Principals and/or their designees have the right to reclaim allocated resources with reasonable notice to users.