



Westford Public Schools
Shaping the future one child at a time.

Employee Handbook

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Administrative Offices

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Dear Colleague:

It is with a great sense of pride and pleasure that I welcome you to another exciting year in the Westford Public Schools. Our reputation as an excellent school system is a direct result of the outstanding contributions of our staff. If you recently have joined our educational community, I welcome you into a highly professional, strongly supportive learning environment in which the needs of children come first in our thoughts and actions.

This employee handbook has been developed to provide information on many personnel and operational issues. The contents characterize the caring, respectful culture for which we are known. With your help, this atmosphere will continue through collaborative, respectful conversations with colleagues and students. The handbook reflects federal and state statutes as well as the policies and regulations of the Westford Public Schools. Updates that correspond to policies or operating procedures will occur from time to time. This handbook is not intended to take the place of any collective bargaining agreement, and is consistent with current state, federal and school committee policies.

I want to sincerely thank you for taking the time to read and understand the contents of this document. Our objective is to bring organizational consistency to the school district. With this strong foundation, we can devote the majority of our time to our true mission and passion: developing the minds and lives of our students.

Finally, I wish to thank the members of the Employee Handbook Committee. The endless hours devoted to this handbook have produced a document that reflects great pride in our school system and a deep respect for our core values. Thank you for a job well done.

Sincerely,

Everett V. Olsen, Jr.,
Superintendent of Schools

Shaping the future one child at a time.

ABOUT THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Our Employee Handbook was created to provide all employees of the Westford Public School System with an overview of policies and procedures. Understand that this handbook contains important information on the general personnel policies, practices, privileges, and obligations of being an employee. In addition, the Westford Public School Employee Handbook contains notifications required by law.

This handbook does not constitute a contract and makes no guarantees of employment, compensation, or benefits. The Superintendent and/or School Committee reserve the right to make changes in the policies and practices at any time at their sole discretion, and interpret and administer the policies in light of changing circumstances, events, and applicable statutory guidelines.

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SECTION I - SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND ADMINISTRATION

School Committee

The School Committee is the elected body that establishes goals and policies for Westford Public Schools, appoints the Superintendent and approves the budget.

Avery Adam
Arthur Benoit
Megan Eckroth
Alicia Mallon
Gloria Miller
Terence Ryan
Chris Sanders

Website: <http://www.westfordk12.us/sc/index.html>

Central Office Administration

Everett V. Olsen Jr., Superintendent of Schools
Kerry Clery, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Kathleen Auth, Director of School Finance
Courtney Moran, Director of Pupil Services
JoEllen Baird, Director of Student Information & Administrative Technology
Michelle Duffett, Human Resource Coordinator

Principals/Schools

James Antonelli, Westford Academy
Timothy Hislop, Lloyd G. Blanchard Middle School
Christopher Chew, Stony Brook School
Lori McDermott, Abbot School
ChrisLouis Sardella, Norman E. Day School
Sharon Kennelly, John A. Crisafulli School
Susan DuBois, Nabnasset School
Donna Pobuk, Rita Edwards Miller School
Kevin LaCoste, Col. John Robinson School
Courtney Moran, Westford Integrated Preschool at Millennium School

Civil Rights Compliance Officers

Title IX Officer

Kerry Clery
Assistant Superintendent
Administrative Offices
23 Depot St.
Westford, MA 01886
978-692-5560 Ext 2105

Section 504 Officer

Courtney Moran
Director of Pupil Services
Administrative Offices
23 Depot St.
Westford, MA 01886
978-692-5560 Ext 2112

System Wide Directors & Coordinators

Director of Guidance	Wendy Hoekman-Pechacek
Director of Athletics	Jeff Bunyon
School Health Coordinator	Joan Mitchell

English Language Arts: K – 5 Jennifer Traverso 6 –12 Janet Keirstead	Science: K – 5 Elaine Santelmann 6 – 12 Jenny Kravitz	Foreign Language: 6-12 Sharon Charbonnaire
Mathematics: K – 5 Mary O’Gorman 6 – 12 Krissy McHugh	Social Studies: K – 5 Elaine Santelmann 6 – 12 Adam Ingano	Visual and Performing Arts: K – 12 Andrea Mejia Phys Ed./Wellness: K – 12 Brian Roark

Westford Public Schools Home Page

Website: <http://www.westfordk12.us>

School Calendar

Website: <http://www.westfordk12.us/calendar/index.html>

School Cancellation and Delays

The Superintendent will exercise one of the following options when weather conditions dictate a change in the normal opening of the school day:

1. Cancellation of school
2. Delayed opening of schools: 1-hour or 2-hour option
 - If a 1-hour delay is announced, preschool and kindergarten will be held
 - If a 2-hour delay is announced, AM preschool and kindergarten will be cancelled
 - Bus pick-up times will be delayed accordingly. *Example: If school is delayed by 1 hour, busses will pick up the students 1 hour later than the usual pick-up time.*

Announcements of no school or delayed opening will be communicated by the following methods:

1. Radio stations: WBZ1030; WRKO 680
2. Television stations: Channels 4, 5, 7 & Fox 25.
3. Posting on the Westford Public Schools web page.
4. Staff members are notified via automated phone message system.

*Note: Each school will have appropriate procedures regarding school scheduling.

Mission, Beliefs, Goals & Core Values

The Westford Public Schools will provide an excellent, free education to all students in the community. The School System will engage its students in a challenging learning environment to prepare them for the political, economic, social, and technological challenges of a rapidly changing world. It will develop in its students the skills and attitudes that will enable them to be lifelong learners, to exercise sound judgment and to become responsible, contributing members of society. The Westford Public Schools will endeavor to create an environment of mutual respect, courtesy and responsible behavior.

To accomplish this mission, the Westford Public Schools will:

- Provide a curriculum designed to educate the whole child while recognizing that each child is a unique and individual learner.
- Engage staff and administration in on-going professional development.
- Provide support services that meet the needs of each individual student.
- Encourage the collaboration of parents, residents, and the greater Westford community.
- Practice responsible and efficient fiscal planning and management.

Standards of Conduct

Standards of conduct are guidelines for all employees to follow in order to help create a safe, comfortable and productive work environment that sets forth a model worthy of emulation by students. All staff members are expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern for the well-being of staff and students.

Respectful Climate

Our hope and expectation is that all employees of the Westford Public School System will contribute to making our working climate one that is characterized by respectful interactions, cooperation among school and department personnel, open and constructive communication and trust. We will speak kindly with one another and acknowledge each other's talents and skills although we may have different ways of achieving the same goals. We will work collaboratively toward common goals, support one another and accept each other's ideas. We will communicate openly by seeking, giving and receiving feedback, and by sharing information necessary to successfully complete our tasks.

Ethical Behavior

The Westford Public School System expects its employees to follow the highest standards in terms of moral, legal, and ethical conduct in the workplace.

From time to time, employees may be in a predicament that may be considered unethical or illegal. If they are uncertain of the situation, they are expected to contact their supervisor or the Human Resources Department for guidance and direction.

Website: <http://www.mass.gov/ethics/>

All employees are required to complete the online training program through the State Ethics Commission website within thirty (30) days of hire, and every two (2) years thereafter. The online training can be accessed at: <http://www.muniprog.eth.state.ma.us/>

Core Values

Our Core Values are the behaviors, attitudes, beliefs and commitments that we must exhibit to fulfill our school system's vision. These values should be understood and shared by every member of our school system - our values are "what we stand for." These Core Values will guide our action, focus our energies and act as an anchor point for all our plans.

1. Pursuing Excellence in a Learning Community

- continually improving
- reaching for excellence and meeting high standards
- working together to support all students
- collaborative initiatives, relationships, and interactions between students, staff, parents, and community
- expecting respect, integrity, ethical behavior, and good decision-making
- connecting and integrating curriculum
- providing appropriate facilities and technology for teaching, learning, and working

2. Promoting Individual Growth and Development

- being guided by the wisdom of what is best for children
- employing differentiated instruction techniques in a developmentally appropriate manner
- nurturing students' self-confidence, intellectual growth and social interactions
- setting high expectations/standards for students, staff, and parents
- recognizing and rewarding student achievements in co-curricular activities
- producing well-rounded individuals
- recognizing that the schools support the growth and development of teachers, staff, and parents
- providing leadership opportunities

3. Ensuring Safety and Well-Being

- being committed to physical safety and health
- recognizing the importance of psychological and emotional health and well-being
- ensuring safe and healthy facilities
- creating an environment of trust, support, respect
- providing a secure and comfortable learning environment

4. Supporting Creativity and Innovation

- encouraging teachers, staff, and students to innovate and take risks, without fear of judgment
- allowing more student choices
- motivating students to be engaged beyond scores and other traditional assessments
- encouraging self-motivation, life-long learning, and curiosity
- continually improving, growing, and changing

5. Fostering Connections with Local and Global Communities

- recognizing that the community is all-encompassing: from the local community of Westford to the global community of the entire world
- respecting diversity and caring for each other
- valuing community service (local to world) as a way of giving back and doing good
- seeing ourselves as global citizens, with the ability to contribute to change
- sharing resources within Westford and in the larger world

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Westford Public Schools expects all staff and students to model behavior consistent with our Core Values. The school system is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from the divisive impact of bullying and cyber bullying. The Westford Public Schools' goal is to eliminate bullying, cyber bullying and acts of aggression that are harmful to our students, staff, our school system's culture, and that impede the learning process.

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, Westford Public Schools have policies and procedures in place for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These policies and procedures ensure that members of the school community – students, parents, and staff – know what will happen and what actions will be taken when incidents of bullying occur.

M.G.L. c. 370 <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section370>

Link to the Westford Public School Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form and the WPS Bullying Prevention Curriculum.

SECTION II – GENERAL PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Staff Hiring

Westford Public Schools will endeavor to attract, secure, and hold the highest qualified personnel for all positions.

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent and the Principals to determine the personnel needs and to recruit suitable candidates for employment. All applications for employment either on a permanent or temporary basis, will be processed through our website: www.westfordk12.us/apply and <https://www.schoolspring.com/>

To be eligible for a teaching position, an applicant shall meet the license requirements imposed by law, and shall furnish satisfactory evidence of citizenship and/or legal right to work and previous relevant work experience, as required. All teachers will be required to submit verification of subject matter competency.

An offer of employment will be subject to applicable licensure, confirmation of “CORI” (Criminal Offender Record Information), a national fingerprint background check, and passing a pre-employment drug test and completing the Conflict of Interest On-line Training.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

M.G.L. 71:38G- Definitions; Provisional Educator, Provisional Educator with Advanced Standing and Standard Educator Certificates

M.G.L. 71:41- Professional Status for Teachers; Contracts; Good Cause Protection for Principals; Dismissal of Principals by Superintendent

M.G.L. 71:38R- Criminal background check of current or prospective school employee, volunteer, or other persons having direct and unmonitored contact with children; criminal offender record information; state and national fingerprint-based criminal background checks

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P4103 – Hiring Practices and Policies

Employee Orientation

All employees are to meet with the Human Resource Coordinator prior to beginning work. Each new teacher is expected to participate in the summer “New Teacher Program”. New teachers will be assigned a mentor for the first year of employment. On-site supervisors provide on-going support at the building level.

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P4105 – Staff Orientation

Student Teachers

Westford Public Schools welcomes the opportunity to work with accredited college and university teacher education programs to provide student teaching placement for pre-service teachers. The protocol for placement of student teachers is as follows:

The college or university practicum advisor contacts the building principal with the placement request. The principal may require the request to be made in writing as well as any other pertinent documentation.

1. The building principal will determine which teacher in the building will serve as the student teacher’s cooperating practitioner.

2. The building principal will notify the Assistant Superintendent of the placement. The Assistant Superintendent will maintain an updated list of student teachers, their supervising teacher, building assignment, and date of service.
3. Prior to the beginning of the student teacher practicum, the sponsoring college/university is to provide written guidelines of the expectations of both the student teacher and the cooperating practitioner during the course of the experience. The guidelines must specify the number of required hours for the practicum, the level of independency expected of the student teacher and the method and person from the college/university responsible for supervision of the practicum. Finally, the guidelines must contain a provision for mediation and/or termination of the practicum. Copies of these guidelines will be given to the cooperating practitioner and the building principal.
4. An initial meeting prior to the student teaching practicum must be held at the building level with the student teacher, cooperating practitioner, and college/university supervisor to review the guidelines, and sign a contract of agreement.
5. The student teacher must contact the principal's office prior to the beginning of the student teaching practicum to complete necessary paperwork including a C.O.R.I. check and fingerprinting.

Personnel Files

Confidential personnel files are maintained at Central Office by Human Resources under the auspices of the Superintendent of Schools.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

M.G.L. 4:7- Public Records; Definitions

M.G.L. 66:10 – Inspection of Public Records

M.G.L. 71:42C – Records of Teacher; Inspection Westford

M.G.L. 149:52C – Personnel Records

Public Schools Policy:

P4112 – Personnel Records

Inspection of Records

A personnel folder for each present and former employee will be accurately maintained in the Central Administrative Office. In addition to application for employment and references, the folders will contain records and information relative to compensation, payroll deductions, evaluations, and any other pertinent information. An employee will receive notice within ten (10) days, whenever a document, that has been or may be used to negatively affect an employee's qualification for employment, promotion, transfer, additional compensation, or the possibility that the employee will be subject to disciplinary action, is placed in the employee's personnel file. The Superintendent/designee will be the official custodian for personnel files and will have overall responsibility for maintaining and preserving the confidentiality of the files within the provisions of the law. Each employee will have the right, upon written request, to review the contents of his/her own personnel file. Records cannot be removed from the department. Employees who wish to obtain copies of documents contained in their personnel file must first submit a written request to Human Resources.

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Change of Name or Address

Any change of name, address, telephone number or personal data must be sent to the Human Resources Office on an Employee Information Form in order to change and/or correct records. Any name change requires a copy of the new social security card. No records will be changed until documentation is received.

Required Forms

Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification System (SAFIS)

Westford Public Schools shall have access and shall obtain evidence of a national fingerprint based criminal history background check for any employee of the school department who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children.

Code of Massachusetts Regulations Reference:

603 CMR 51:00

MA Session Laws Ch 459 of the Acts of 2012

Website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/chri/lawsregs.html>

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P4503 – Fingerprint Based Criminal History Checks

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI)

Westford Public Schools shall have access to and shall obtain all available criminal offender record information annually from the criminal history systems board of any current or prospective employee or volunteer of the school department, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, including any individual who regularly provides school related transportation to children.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

603 CMR 51.00 71:38R

Website: www.mass.gov or <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr51.html?section=all>

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P4120 – Criminal Offender Record Information

W-4

The W-4 form is used so that your employer can withhold the correct Federal Income Tax from your pay. Because your tax situation may change, you may want to refigure your withholding each year and complete a new form as needed.

M-4

The M-4 form is used so that your employer can withhold Massachusetts Income Tax from your wages. If you claim the same number of exemptions for Massachusetts and Federal Income Taxes, only the W-4 needs to be completed.

I-9

The Immigration Reform and Control Act legally mandates that U.S. employers verify employment eligibility status of newly hired employees and make it unlawful for employers to knowingly hire or continue to employ unauthorized workers. New Employees must submit two (2) forms of government issued identification.

Direct Deposit

Direct deposit saves time, eliminates lost, stolen, or forged checks, and your money is deposited even if you are away on payday. Direct Deposit allows the town to credit your net pay to your account and to correct any over or under deposit to your account. The initiation of Direct Deposit takes two payroll cycles after receipt of the authorization form. You will receive a Direct Deposit Statement verifying the amount of the deposit on each payday. To change banks or accounts, you will need to fill out a new authorization form.

Payroll Calendar

All school employees are paid on a bi-weekly basis. The number of payroll periods is subject to contractual language. Payroll checks are sent to the employees' corresponding buildings when school is in session. All checks will be mailed when school buildings are closed for vacations, holidays, and inclement weather. Employees who have elected Direct Deposit will continue to have their paycheck deposited into their bank account.

Significant Dates

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Benefits

Employees are eligible for benefits through the Town of Westford who work 20 hours per week or more. Employee benefits commence the first day of the month following the date of hire and terminate on the last day of the month.

Tax Sheltered Annuity (403B)

Presently the Town of Westford has set up deduction options for Tax Sheltered Annuity Plans (403b). School employees may enroll or make changes in a tax sheltered annuity program anytime during the year. Accounts must be arranged by the employee and his/her financial planner prior to submitting a request to Human Resources. The Human Resources Department will in turn submit all requests for approval to MidAmerica, the district's third party plan administrator.

Deferred Compensation

The Town of Westford offers a 457 Deferred Compensation Plan that allows participants to save for retirement with pre-tax dollars through salary deductions.

Massachusetts Deferred Compensation SMART Plan
Great West Retirement Solutions
P.O. Box 173764 Denver, CO 80217-3764
P 1-877-457-1900 F 1-866-745-5766
<https://mass-smart.gwrs.com/login.do>

Insurance

The Town of Westford provides eligible employees and their dependents the opportunity to participate in a variety of voluntary and contributory insurance plans which may change from time to time. Employees have 30 days from date of hire to enroll in the Health, Dental, Life and/or Disability Plans. Otherwise, the employee will have to wait until the next open enrollment period (October). At the time of a qualifying event such as marriage, divorce, birth/adoption of a child, loss of coverage through a spouse, or death of a family member the employee may elect a plan at that time.

Health Insurance

The Town of Westford provides employees and their eligible dependents the opportunity to participate in various Health Insurance Plans (HMO & PPO).

Voluntary Dental Insurance

The Town of Westford provides employees and their eligible dependents the opportunity to participate in a voluntary Dental Insurance Plan. Dental must be in place when you retire to continue coverage and may not be reinstated once coverage is cancelled.

Voluntary Life Insurance

The Town of Westford provides employees and their eligible dependents the opportunity to participate in a voluntary Life Insurance Plan. Only benefit eligible employees can participate in a Town sponsored life insurance plan.

Voluntary Short & Long Term Disability Plan

The Town of Westford provides employees the opportunity to participate in a voluntary Short & Long Term Disability Insurance Plans.

Leave of Absence/Retirement (Benefit Eligibility)

Anyone granted a leave of absence should contact Human Resources to ensure continuous insurance coverage for the period of his/her absence. Employees who go on an unpaid leave of absence must assume responsibility for payment of any health, life, LTD, STD, or dental insurance coverage. As a retiree of the Town of Westford, you are eligible to continue with your current insurance benefits with the exception of LTD, STD, Voluntary Life, and Vision Insurance.

Termination of Insurance

Upon leaving employment of the Town of Westford, benefits will terminate on the first day of the following month after termination of employment. During this period, the employee will be notified and given an opportunity to continue benefits under COBRA.

COBRA

Under the federal law entitled the “Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1985,” known as COBRA, employees and their covered dependents may have certain rights to continued group health insurance coverage, for 18 months, if they lose their eligibility due to: termination of employment; or reduction in work hours. Enrolled dependents may also have the right under COBRA to continued coverage for 36 months if their eligibility is terminated due to: loss of status as a dependent; the employee’s eligibility for Medicare; divorce or legal separation from the employee; or death of the employee.

The cost of COBRA coverage is 100% of the total premium, and is to be paid in full by the eligible employee, spouse or dependent.

Flexible Spending Accounts

Flexible Spending Accounts allow you to set aside a portion of “pre tax” dollars to cover certain health and dependent care expenses. These contributions are deducted from your paycheck prior to federal and state taxes.

Benefit Strategies
967 Elm Street
Manchester, NH 03101 888-401-FLEX
www.benstrat.com

Employee Assistance Program

It is the responsibility of each employee to seek help before a condition has an adverse impact on his/her employment. The Town of Westford provides a no-cost Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through MIIA (Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association). The EAP entitles you and your household members to confidential counseling and assistance on personal or work-related issues such as family & marital problems, drug

& alcohol abuse, stress management, financial difficulties, health problems and emotional stress.

AllOne Health
<http://www.allonehealth.com>
800-451-1834

Employee Arrest

In the event of an arrest of an employee of Westford Public Schools on criminal charges, the Superintendent will evaluate the case on an individual basis and determine the appropriate action to be taken under the guidelines stated in the policy.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P4117– Employee Arrest

Dismissal or Demotion of Staff

Please refer to the following:

Massachusetts General Law Reference:
M.G.L. 71:42 – Dismissal or Demotion of Employees by Principals and Superintendent; Review and Arbitration of Dismissal

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P4106 – Dismissal or Demotion of Staff

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Evaluation of Staff

Please refer to the following:

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P2108 - Instructional Program
P4403 – Evaluation of Staff

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Resignation

The Superintendent of Schools is authorized to accept resignations from employees of the schools on behalf of the School Committee, and shall report said resignations to the School Committee at its next regular meeting. Employees are encouraged to notify the building administrator and the Human Resource department of such intent at as early a date as possible and in accordance with the appropriate negotiated agreement.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P4107 – Resignation

Refer to your negotiated contract

Retirement

Staff members who intend to retire are encouraged to indicate their plans to the Superintendent of Schools at as early a date as possible and/or in accordance with the appropriate negotiated agreement. The retirement benefit selection determines if either you or your survivors will receive all or a portion of your contributions and interest in the form of a refund, retirement allowance or survivor benefit.

Employees will be enrolled in one of the following retirement plans based on your job classification.

Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System

You are eligible to join the MTRS if you are employed as a teacher or administrator in a Massachusetts public school outside the City of Boston or in any charter school in Massachusetts and:

- you are covered by a contractual agreement regarding your employment;
- you are employed on at least a half-time basis;
- you are certified by the Department of Education; and,
- your contractual agreement requires that you be certified by the Department of Education as a condition of your employment.

Contribution rate is determined by the date when the member first enrolls in the public retirement system.

Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System
500 Rutherford Avenue
Charlestown, MA 02129-1628
617-679-6877
Website: <http://www.mass.gov/mtrs/>

Middlesex Retirement System

Membership in the Middlesex Retirement System is required by law for all employees who are employed in a permanent position and who work 20 hours per week or more in an eligible position. The amount each employee is required to contribute to the Middlesex Retirement System each year is set by statute.

Middlesex Retirement System
25 Linnell Circle, Box 160
Billerica, MA 01865
800-258-3805
Website: www.middlesexretirement.org

OBRA

As a part-time, seasonal or temporary employee of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or a Massachusetts local government employer, you are required to participate in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Deferred Compensation Plan. The Plan is an alternative to Social Security coverage as permitted by the federal Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990. As an OBRA employee, you must contribute at least 7.5% of your gross compensation per pay period to the Plan.

Massachusetts Deferred Compensation SMART Plan
Great West Retirement Solutions
P.O. Box 173764 Denver, CO 80217-3764
P 1-877-457-1900
F 1-866-745-5766
[Http://www.mass.gov/smartplan/index](http://www.mass.gov/smartplan/index)

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

M.G.L. 32:16 – Involuntary Retirement; Right to Hearing and Appeal

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P4108 – Retirement

Exit Interviews

Exit interviews are encouraged when employees leave Westford Public Schools as the system may benefit from your honest and candid impressions and suggestions. Formal exit interviews with Human Resources and/or Superintendent are available upon request. Keys, educational materials, and equipment shall be returned to the building Principal.

Professional Development Plan

Westford Public Schools shall adopt and implement a Professional Development Plan for all principals, teachers, and other professional staff. The Professional Development Plan shall be updated annually. The Westford Public Schools budget shall include funds for the Professional Development Plan.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

M.G.L. 71:38G – Definitions; Provisional Educator, Provisional Educator with Advanced Standing and Standard Educator Certificates

M.G.L. 71:38Q – Professional Development Plan for Professional Staff

M.G.L. 71:59C – School Councils

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P4502 - Professional Development Plan

Educational Workshops

Any staff member requesting to attend a conference or workshop should initiate such a request with their immediate supervisor. The goals of such workshops and conferences should relate to the vision of Westford Public Schools.

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P4119 – Educational Workshops

Refer to your negotiated contract

Reimbursement of Expenses

Building supplies are purchased at the beginning of each year. Should you need additional supplies please contact your immediate supervisor. Prior approval and supporting receipts are required for any reimbursement for job related expenses (excluding taxes) as outlined in the School Committee policy. All receipts should be submitted in a timely fashion. Staff members whose duties and responsibilities require travel to multiple locations throughout the district, may submit reimbursement for mileage at the standard mileage rate as determined by the IRS.

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P3506– Expense Reimbursement

SECTION III – RULES AND REGULATIONS:

Professional Dress & Grooming

All employees are expected to come to school clean and to wear clothing that meets or exceeds their high regard for education and presents an image consistent with their job responsibilities.

Work Related Illness/Injury

Any employee who is injured while on the job, should report immediately to an administrator/school nurse. All incidents need to be reported by completing the Supervisor's Report of Accident-Intake Form.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P4113 – Worker's Compensation Insurance

Personal Telephone Calls

Use of school telephones for personal business is prohibited except in emergencies.

Errands Outside of School Buildings

To ensure both student and staff safety, an employee needing to leave the building during school hours is required to seek prior approval from the building Principal or his/her designee. Furthermore, students are not to be sent on errands outside the building.

Transportation of Pupils by Private Means

In order to best protect you and your student(s) involved in a field trip, faculty must follow field trip regulations and have signed permission slips from parents delineating who the driver is and include the year, make and model of vehicle. Faculty transporting students to the field trip must follow the set itinerary. Non-school personnel are required to show a valid drivers license and a current vehicle registration; the faculty member running the field trip is required to keep copies of drivers' information. All employees are discouraged from providing transportation to students before, during, and after school hours.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P5404 – Student Field Trips
P5405 – Student Travel
P6120 – Field Trips

Fire Drill/Crisis Management Procedures

Every school has fire drill and crisis management procedures. All employees will familiarize themselves and students with the fire drill and crisis management procedures for their school or area.

School Stage Procedures – Inspection by Fire Department

The Westford Fire Department has established a policy that prior to the performance of any stage productions in Westford Public Schools, persons responsible will contact the Westford Fire Department for a safety inspection of the site. No performance will be allowed without the issuance of a permit for that purpose. A permit will be issued, only after inspection, and will be valid **ONLY** for the production at hand.

Acceptance & Use of Gifts, Grants and Donations

Gifts from Students

Students and their parents/legal guardians are discouraged from the routine presentation of gifts to school employees on occasions such as holidays and/or the end of the school year. Students and their parents/legal guardians may make contributions to the school in honor of a school employee. The School Committee considers it appropriate to write letters to staff members expressing gratitude or appreciation.

Public employees may not accept any gift worth \$50 or more that is given because of the position he or she holds. Public employees may accept gifts that are worth less than \$50. Written disclosure is required using the “Disclosure of Appearance of Conflict of Interest Form” as required by M.G.L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(3). The law also prohibits supervisors from accepting gifts of any value from staff members.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

M.G.L. 268A - Conduct of Public Officials, Employees
930 CMR 5.00

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P4115 – Gifts to School Personnel Student Handbook

Conflict of Interest

No employee of the Westford Public Schools will engage in or have a financial interest in, directly or indirectly, any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with his/her duties and responsibilities in the school system; nor will any staff member engage in any type of private business during school time or on school property.

Employees will not engage in work of any type where information concerning customer, client, or employer originates from any information available to them through school sources.

In cases where the situation results after initial employment, no employee shall be placed in any position where the direct administration or supervisory authority over the position is exercised by a spouse or relative of that employee.

Employees with questions about how Chapter 268A applies to them may contact the State Ethics Commission’s legal Division.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

M.G.L. 268A-Conduct of Public Officials, Employees

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P4109 –Conflict of Interest

School Wellness

Westford Public Schools is committed to providing a school environment that enhances the developing of lifelong wellness practices by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. The Westford Public School’s Wellness Policy provides guidelines for teachers pertaining to the serving of food at school functions including but not limited to, fundraising, snacks, rewards and celebrations.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P5512 School Wellness Policy (Regulation)

Substance Abuse

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance in the workplace is prohibited. Violations of this prohibition will result in discharge or other appropriate action consistent with Westford Public School System's disciplinary processes that may require such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.

Reporting to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited by the Westford Public School System and will result in immediate corrective action up to and including termination. The Westford Public School System has the responsibility to protect its employees and students from the serious risks of substance abuse. The use of drugs or alcohol affects job performance and creates an unsafe environment for employees.

Violation of the substance abuse policy includes reporting to work under the influence, or the use, possession, manufacture, purchase, transfer, or sale of a controlled or illegal substance on work/school premises. Upon suspicion that an employee may be abusing a substance, an investigation will be conducted and corrective action will follow, if deemed appropriate.

AllOneHealth
www.allonehealth.com, www.emiia.org
800-451-1834

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P4201 - Drug Free Workplace

Drug Free Workplace

Westford Public Schools will maintain a drug-free and alcohol-free workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of controlled substances or alcohol is prohibited while on duty or on school department property. Any violations of this policy will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate suspension or dismissal. Federal law, known as the Drug-Free Workplace Act, requires the Westford Public Schools to certify that it maintains a drug-free workplace as a condition of receiving federal grants and contracts.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P4201 – Drug Free Workplace

Drug Free School Zones

Massachusetts General Law Reference:
M.G.L. Chapter 94C – Drug Free School Zones

Tobacco/Smoke Free Environment

Westford Public Schools are dedicated to providing a healthy, comfortable, and productive environment for staff, students, and citizens. The School Committee believes that education has a central role in establishing patterns of behavior related to good health and shall take measures to help its students to resist tobacco use. Therefore, the School Committee has established the following policy:

Smoking, vaping and the use of tobacco products or e-cigarettes shall be prohibited on school district property. This shall include school buildings and school owned/contracted/leased vehicles. The fine for smoking is \$100.00. An employee can be cited for smoking on school property or in school vehicles by a Board of Health official or an agent of the Board of Health.

Any violation of this policy by staff shall be referred to the appropriate supervisor. First-time violators shall receive a verbal warning with a written notation being kept by the appropriate supervisor. A second violation will receive a written warning with a copy being placed in the personnel file. Further violations shall be considered insubordination and shall be dealt with accordingly and be based upon established policies and procedures for suspension and dismissal of staff. Employees may voluntarily attend approved "Stop Smoking Programs" which may be funded at School Committee expense.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

AllOneHealth
www.allonehealth.com, www.emiia.org
800-451-1834

Any violation of this policy by students shall be reported by the staff to the building Principal at the elementary/middle school level and the Assistant Principal/Deans at the high school level.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

M.G.L. 71:37H-Publication of School Committee Rules and Regulations Relative to the Conduct of Teachers and Students

Town of Westford Tobacco Regulations Reference:

Regulations affecting smoking and the sale, vending and distribution of tobacco in Westford

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P4202 - Smoke Free Environment

Relationships With Students

Teachers and school staff working with students have a responsibility to maintain respectful and appropriate relationships with colleagues, students, parents, and members of the community. In order to maintain the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of members of the community, staff members should strive for the highest possible degree of professional conduct at all times. Whenever there is doubt about the intentions of a staff member in his or her relationships with a student(s), concerns should be brought to the attention of the Principal. Failure to do so may put students and the staff member at risk.

Faculty/Staff Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Please refer to the following:

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P6301 - District Computing Environment

P6302 – District Acceptable Internet Use

Social Networking

Westford Public Schools believes the teaching of cyber safety and responsible online behavior is essential in the

lives of students. Therefore, safe and responsible behavior shall be explicitly taught at our schools and parents/caregivers are requested to reinforce this behavior at home.

All employees are expected to use good judgment when engaging in social networking and other online activity, bearing in mind that as employees of the district they may appear as representatives of the Westford Public Schools. When communicating electronically with students and parents, employees are advised to use only technology that is school-based, and to refrain from using private social networking websites. Employees shall not disclose confidential student information on social media. Inappropriate online behavior, including activity that harms students, or compromises an employee's ability to effectively perform his/her professional responsibilities, may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P6302 Acceptable Use of District-wide Computing Environment

Personal Electronic Device Use

Employees are expected to exercise discretion when using personally owned electronic devices such as cell phones, smart phones, Ipads, tablets, and laptops for personal business. Such device usage during work hours can interfere with safety and may be distracting to others. Employees are encouraged to limit use of personal devices to break times and lunch periods whenever possible.

Tutoring for Pay

Tutoring is defined as giving private instruction or help to an individual or group for which the tutor receives remuneration other than through the School Committee. The Principal may give the parents/legal guardians a list of persons who are willing to tutor. This list may include teachers, but not the student's teacher of the subject in which he/she is to be tutored. Public school buildings may not be used for private teaching for which tuition charge is made, either by staff members employed by the school department, or by any other outside agencies or person, except as approved by the Superintendent or designee.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:
M.G.L. 268A: 23(b)(2)

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P4303 –Tutoring for Pay

Confidentiality

Effective and appropriate communication between administrators, staff, parents and students is vital to the success of the educational process. In order to ensure that such communication can take place in confidence, it is necessary to protect the right to privacy of students and staff.

Individuals associated with students in any capacity shall:

- (1) Not disclose confidential information about students obtained in the course of professional services unless disclosure either authorized or required by law.
- (2) Not accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity that will require the disclosure of confidential information that has been gained by reason of official position.
- (3) Not knowingly make disparaging, false, or malicious statements about staff or students.
- (4) Not withhold pertinent information that is not confidential.

Any violation of this policy will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate suspension or

dismissal.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations 603 CMR 23.00: Student Records

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P5507 – HIV/AIDS

P6111 – Student Records

P6301 – District Computing Environment

P7109 – New Member Orientation

Religious Expressions

Official Neutrality Regarding Religious Activity

Teachers and school administrators, when acting in those capacities, are representatives of the state and are prohibited by the establishment clause from soliciting or encouraging religious activity, and from participating in such activity with students. Teachers and administrators also are prohibited from discouraging activity because of its religious content, and from soliciting or encouraging antireligious activity

Teaching about Religion

Public schools may not provide religious instruction, but they may teach about religion, including the Bible or other scripture: the history of religion, comparative religion, the Bible (or other scripture)-as-literature, and the role of religion in the history of the United States and other countries all are permissible public school subjects. Similarly, it is permissible to consider religious influences on art, music, literature, and social studies. Although public schools may teach about religious holidays, including their religious aspects, and may celebrate the secular aspects of holidays, schools may not observe holidays as religious events or promote such observances by students.

Teaching Values

Though schools must be neutral with respect to religion, they may play an active role with respect to teaching civic values and virtue, and the moral code that holds us together as a community.

The fact that some of these values are held also by religions does not make it unlawful to teach them in school.

Controversial Issues in the Classroom

The presentation and discussion of controversial issues in the classroom should be on an informative basis. The teachers must guard against giving their personal opinions on sectarian or political questions or any other controversial issues until the students have had the opportunity to find, collect, and assemble factual material on the subject; to interpret the data without prejudice; to reconsider assumptions and claims; and to reach their own conclusions. By refraining from expressing personal views before and during the period of research and study, the teacher is encouraging the students to search after truth and to think for themselves. The development of an ability to meet issues without prejudice and to withhold judgments while facts are being collected, assembled, weighed, and relationships seen before drawing inferences or conclusions, is among the most valuable outcomes of a free educational system.

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P6121 – Teaching About Controversial Issues.

SECTION IV – ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Salaries – Salary Schedule Provisions

Initial salaries are established at the time of hiring, consistent with any contractual scales or salary guidelines that exist for the position.

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Seniority

Seniority for the purpose of this handbook is the length of continuous employment as an employee in the Westford Public Schools measured from the date that the employee entered said bargaining unit or agreement.

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Agency Fee

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Grievance Procedure

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Absences

Absences that do not require prior approval from your supervisor should be submitted via an online absence management and substitute placement system.

<https://www.frontlineeducation.com/home>

Personal Days

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Holidays

Teachers and certain other salaried staff who work on a school calendar basis do not receive separate paid holidays. Full time (12 month) employees are eligible for paid holidays as specified in the various union contracts and agreements. Westford Public Schools recognizes the following holidays.

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Columbus Day
Presidents' Day	Veterans' Day*
Patriots' Day	Thanksgiving
Good Friday *	Day after Thanksgiving
Memorial Day	Christmas
Independence Day	

**Based on school calendar*

Vacation Days

Refer to your negotiated contract

Leave Request Procedures

Leave Requests are to be submitted to the building Principal or direct supervisor for approval using the appropriate Leave Request form.

In addition, a request that extends a long weekend or school vacation break must receive the approval of the Superintendent of Schools. Included with the request must be a statement explaining the purpose for the request.

Extended leaves, greater than 3 days, require a formal letter addressed to the principal/direct supervisor, Superintendent of Schools and Human Resource Coordinator. This formal letter should include: type of leave request, pertinent dates, intent to apply eligible sick days or not, article and section in your negotiated contract.

Requests must be approved by all required parties prior to the date or period of time being requested. Refer to your negotiated contract.

Sick Leave

Regular full-time employees and part-time employees are eligible to accrue sick leave. Sick leave is to be used in the event of personal illness or eligible family leave, non-job related injury or disability. Sick leave may be used for doctor's visits that cannot be scheduled outside of normal work hours. Employees absent for 5 or more consecutive days may be asked for documentation from a physician. Refer to your negotiated agreement regarding the provisions of sick leave.

Sick Leave Bank

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Bereavement Leave

Employees should consult their respective collective bargaining contracts and agreements to ascertain the amount of bereavement leave to which they are entitled.

Extended Leave of Absence

Unpaid leaves of absence may be requested as specified in union contracts/agreements and are subject to approval of the Superintendent of Schools. A leave of up to one year without pay may be granted to professional status employees. If such leave is granted, the employee shall notify the Superintendent in writing of the intention to return and the date of return by March 15 of the leave year.

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Administrative Leave

Refer to your negotiated contract.

After School Assistance to Pupils

Staff members who elect to participate in afterschool clubs, activities, or extra help are strongly encouraged to ensure the safe departure of students from school or the location of the activity. Staff members are asked to supervise the safe departure of students to the school bus, care of a parent, guardian, other appropriate adult, or have safely left the premises in their own vehicle. Students should not be left on school premises unsupervised under any circumstances.

Payment of stipends for after school clubs and activities; please refer to your negotiated contract.

Meetings

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Tuition Reimbursement

Westford Public Schools encourages all employees to participate in professional development activities to pursue higher educational programs leading to advanced degrees or certificates. To this end, tuition reimbursement benefits have been negotiated for certain employee groups and information is outlined in your respective union contract and employee agreement.

Course Vouchers

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Educator Licensure

Refer to MA DOE site: <http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/educator-effectiveness/licensure/>

SECTION V – SOME STATE & FEDERAL LAWS APPLYING TO ALL PERSONNEL

Parental Leave/Adoption Leave

Massachusetts Parental Leave Act (PLA):

The PLA requires that an employee on leave be restored to his/her previous or a similar position upon return to employment following leave. That position must have the same status, pay, length of service credit and seniority as the position the employee held prior to the leave. If an employee's job was changed temporarily because of her pregnancy prior to leave (e.g., her hours were reduced or her duties were changed as an accommodation) she should be restored to the same or similar position held prior to such temporary change.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:
M.G.L Chapter 149 §105d

Family and Medical Leave Act

Westford Public Schools follows the federal guidelines under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA). FMLA requires employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave to “eligible” employees for certain family and medical reasons. Employees are eligible if they have worked for a covered employer for at least one year, and for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, and if there are at least 50 employees within 75 miles.

Other Provisions:

Special rules apply to employees of local education agencies. Generally, these rules provide for FMLA leave to be taken in blocks of time when intermittent leave is needed or the leave is required near the end of a school term.

U.S. Department of Labor Websites: <http://www.dol.gov> under section Special Rules concerning Employees of Local Educational Agencies: Title 29 Chapter 28 Subchapter 2618
Family and Medical Leave Act <https://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/>

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P4118 – Family & Medical Leave

Military Leave

When an employee is called to military service, the employee must give advance written notice to the school district of the military leave. Written notice of service may include copies of orders or other written documentation with respect to being called to service.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:
Website: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/> under Chapter 33: Section 59

Jury Duty

Employees are granted time off with pay to serve Jury Duty. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the Human Resources Department for submittal to the Payroll Department. Any compensation received by the Court must also be submitted to the Human Resources Department for submittal to the Director of School Finance.

Non-Discrimination/Affirmative Action Policy

Westford Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer. It is the policy of the Westford Public School System to prohibit discrimination of any type and to afford equal employment opportunities to employees and applicants, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetics, homelessness, or veteran status. Any employee, volunteer, or pupil shall not demonstrate any discrimination in any activity associated with the Westford Public Schools.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

M.G.L. 71:39 Restriction on Information Required from Applicants for Positions

Professional Teacher Status/School Nurse Status

As cited in Massachusetts General Law, a teacher, school librarian, school adjustment counselor, school social worker, or school psychologist who has served in Westford Public Schools for the three previous consecutive school years shall be considered a teacher, and shall be entitled to professional teacher status.

The Superintendent, upon the recommendation of the Principal, may award professional teacher status to any teacher who has served in the Principal's school for not less than one year, or to a teacher who has attained professional status in any other public school district in the commonwealth. A teacher without professional teacher status shall be notified in writing on or before May 15th whenever such person is not to be employed for the following school year. Unless such notice is given, a teacher without professional status shall be deemed to be appointed for the following school year.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

M.G.L. 71:41 – Professional Status for Teachers, Contracts, Good Cause Protection for Principals; Dismissals of Principals by Superintendent

M.G.L. 71:42 – Dismissal or Demotion of Employees by Principal and Superintendent; Review and Arbitration of Dismissal

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P4501 – Professional Teacher Status

Refer to your negotiated contract.

Harassment

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, creed, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability will not be tolerated in the Westford Public Schools. Retaliation for reporting harassment or for participating in an investigation of alleged harassment is also prohibited. 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 buses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

M.G.L. 151B:3A – Policy on Sexual Harassment Website: www.eeoc.gov

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P4203– Harassment

Convicted of a Crime

Refer to 603 CMR 7.14 (8a)

Memorandum of Understanding

The Westford School System and the Westford Police Department agree to coordinate their efforts to prevent substance abuse (defined as illegal drugs and alcohol) by the students of Westford and to prevent violence involving students of Westford.

Furthermore, we agree to respond effectively and cooperatively for everyone's protection from incidents of school delinquency and criminal behavior. The joint effort of cooperative response will focus on incidents, which take place on school grounds, within school property or at school sponsored events.

Procedure for Reporting of Child Abuse & Neglect

The Mandated Reporter Statute: c.119 51-A

Massachusetts Law includes the following professionals as mandated reporters:

- Psychologists, emergency medical technicians, dentists, nurses, chiropractors, podiatrists, optometrists, osteopaths;
- Public or private schoolteachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors;
- Day care and child care workers, including any person paid to care for, or work with, a child in any public or private facility, or home or program funded or licensed by the Commonwealth, which provides day care or residential services. This includes child care resource and referral agencies, as well as voucher management agencies, family day care and child care food programs;
- Social workers, foster parents, probation officers, clerks magistrate of the district courts, and parole officers;
- School attendance officers; allied mental health and licensed human services professionals;
- Psychiatrists, and clinical social workers; drug and alcoholism counselors;

Mandated reporters who are staff members of schools, medical facilities, or other public or private institutions, may notify the Department of Children and Families directly or notify the person in charge of the facility (or their designee) who is then responsible for contacting the Department of Children and Families.

Mandated reporters must make an oral report by immediately telephoning the local Department of Children and Families area office or the hotline after business hours. In addition, a written report must be submitted within 48 hours.

These reports should contain (when available) the child's name, date of birth, address, information on the child's parents or person in charge of his/her care, the nature and extent of the neglect, abuse, and/or injuries, the manner in which this information was learned of, and any other pertinent information.

Mandated reporters are also required to submit their name, contact information, and relationship with the child.

Massachusetts law states that any mandated reporter who fails to file required oral and written reports may be punished by a fine of up to \$1,000.00.

Under the law, mandated reporters who file a report in good faith are protected from liability in any civil or criminal action filed in connection to the report.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:
M.G.L. Chapter 119, Section 51A – Public Welfare

Whistleblower – Waste, Fraud and Abuse

Employees who have engaged in the following activities have whistleblower protection through Massachusetts law and are protected against retaliation:

Disclosing, threatening to disclose, providing information, or objecting to any activity, practice, or policy that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of law, rule, or regulation, or poses a risk to public health, safety, or the environment.

Whistleblowers are protected from:

- Firing
- Suspension
- Demotion; and
- Any adverse employment action being taken as a reprisal

Massachusetts General Law Reference:
M.G.L. Chapter 12A §14c

SECTION VI – ITEMS PERTAINING TO PUPILS & OTHERS

Attendance

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P5409 – Attendance

Medication Policy

Westford Public Schools shall follow the Medication Administration Protocol from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Regulation 105 CMR 210.000. The Head Nurse shall adapt, without changing the context, this protocol to make it relevant to the Westford Public Schools. This adaptation shall be approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. A notebook containing all school health policies, regulations, protocols, and forms will be available in each school nurse's office.

All prescription and over the counter medications needed by staff during the school day should be kept in the original container in a secure location. To ensure student safety, staff should report any missing or lost medication immediately to an administrator.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P5503 – Administration of Prescription Medications

Children Accompanying Staff to the Workplace

In order to protect the safety and well-being of employees and students, and to eliminate liability to the district, children of staff are prohibited from being in the school building during the work day.

Pets/Animals in the Workplace

Pets/animals are not allowed in school buildings in order to protect the health and safety of employees and students, to eliminate liability to the district and to maintain a professional and clean environment. Exceptions can be made for curriculum related purposes at the discretion of the building principal. Service animals, as defined by the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, are permissible for use.

Health & Emergency Information Sheets

A nurse in each school building will be responsible for the collection and maintenance of all staff and student health and emergency information sheets. This information should be disseminated to appropriate staff.

Field Trips

Pupils participating in field trips, sponsored by the public schools, shall submit parental approval in writing prior to the event. School Committee policies detail the procedures for all field trips. It shall be the policy of Westford Public Schools to obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information (C.O.R.I.) from the Criminal History Systems Board and Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification System (SAFIS) for employee(s) or volunteer(s) who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children over the course of the field trip. Staff members are reminded that field trips should relate to the appropriate curriculum and enhance the learning experience.

“The Department of Public Health grants registration to the Westford Public Schools for the limited purpose of

permitting the delegation of prescription medications to unlicensed, properly trained responsible adult(s) for students on field trips and short term school events, when a school nurse (RN) is not available...”

(Adapted from the Westford Public Schools Medication Administration Protocol and www.mass.gov/dph/regs/reg105cmr210.pdf).

Teachers should consult their building administrator(s) and the school nurse for Field Trip Protocol regarding medication of students.

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P5404 - Student Field Trips

P5405 - Student Travel

P6120 - Field Trips

P4120 - Criminal Offender Record Information

P4503 –Fingerprint Based Criminal History Checks

Student Records

State and federal laws governing school records allow parents and legal guardians to inspect, add to, and to request to amend the school records of their children in accordance with 603 CMR Section 23.00 of the Massachusetts Department of Education student regulations. Students may also inspect their own records upon reaching the age of 14 or Grade 9. A professionally qualified school staff person shall be available, upon request, to interpret any of the contents. No information in a student record shall be given to a third party without the specific written consent of the student and/or his or her parents, unless a specific exception within 603 CMR 23.07(4) applies. A student’s temporary record is destroyed after notification after five years. A student’s permanent record is retained for 60 years.

Access to student records is available through the schools Administrative Offices.

Teachers, nurses, guidance counselors, and administrators are obligated to be current on the Individual Education Plan (IEP), 504, Title 1 Reports, and any other correspondence relating to the academic, emotional, and/or medical concerns of each student in their school or class.

Massachusetts General Law Reference:

Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations 603 CMR Section 23.00: Student Records

Westford Public Schools Policy:

P6111 - Student Records

P4111 – Review of Student Files

Sales through Schools

Staff and Students shall not sell materials or products for private gain in school buildings or on school property. However, they may sell tickets and materials for school-sponsored events with approval of the Principal or designee. Students will not solicit staff (either in or out of school) to purchase tickets or merchandise of any sort, including those for school-sponsored activities.

Students/staff/vendors are prohibited from selling competitive food during school lunch hours.

Research Studies Involving Students

If school personnel or students are the subjects of a research study conducted within a school building, then approval for such a study must be given by the School Committee which will evaluate the ethical procedures involved. If the research study is conducted at the high school or by a high school student attending Westford Academy, then approval must be obtained by the Institutional Review Board (IRD) that has been established on-site to ensure the ethical treatment of subjects.

Home Instruction (Prolonged Illness or Accident)

When homebound instruction is under way, the program design for each student is determined by his or her educational plan and consists primarily of academic tasks which are coordinated by the regular/special education teacher(s) and the home instruction teacher.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P6201 – Homebound Instruction

Emergency Response Manual

All employees should be familiar with their individual school plan on Crisis Response Management.

Homework Policy

The School Committee recommends the appropriate assignment of homework. Homework should be a useful adjunct to in-school learning. It should be an application or adaptation of a classroom experience; it should not be assigned for disciplinary purposes. Teachers should use discretion in the assignment of homework prior to weekends, vacations, and holidays. Homework and projects should not be assigned so that the due dates will conflict with the celebration of religious holidays.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P6112 – Homework

Scheduling of Tests on Religious Holidays

Teachers shall reference the Westford Public Schools Calendar when scheduling homework and tests.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P6113 – Scheduling of Tests

Dismissal of Student by School Personnel

In the event a student should be sent home during the school day due to illness or disciplinary reasons, he or she must be accompanied home by a parent/legal guardian or a designated person. He or she must be kept in school until the end of the session if a parent/legal guardian cannot be reached.

A student of legal age may transport him/herself home.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P5110 – Dismissal of Student by School Personnel

Curriculum and Instruction

Teachers shall adhere to the educational philosophy of the Westford Public Schools. Curriculum and Instruction

shall be designed as detailed per Westford Public Schools Policy.

Westford Public Schools sanctions the use of audio-visual material for curriculum-related purposes only. Instructional AV material should be viewed with advanced planning and pre and post-viewing activities and/or study guides. This information will be available for administrator's review at the beginning of the unit of study.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P6101 – Educational Philosophy
P6103 – Curriculum & Instruction

Discipline

The primary goal of our disciplinary policies and procedures is to ensure that the student develops a sense of responsibility for his/her own actions. If we accept the premise that we are preparing students to take their own place in adult life, then we must also prepare them for the reality that the adult world does not excuse irresponsibility, forgetfulness, or poor judgment; nor does it look with favor on the individual who does not acknowledge the rights of others. Disciplinary policy should be viewed as a vehicle through which self-discipline is developed. Sending students to the office for disciplinary purposes should be held to an absolute minimum. However, staff members will report to building administrators any student behavior that they feel may be drug or alcohol induced. The use of drugs or the consumption of any alcoholic beverage on school property or at school functions is prohibited. Under no condition is a student to be stationed in the corridor for disciplinary reasons.

Westford Public Schools Policy:
P5301 - Student Conduct P5312 - Corporal Punishment
P5302 - Student Handbooks
P5314 – Suspension, Exclusion, Expulsion
P6301 - District Computing Environment
P6302 - District Acceptable Internet use and individual school handbook

