



**WESTFORD ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK**

PRE-SCHOOL - GRADE 5

2019-2020

Westford Public Schools

*“Shaping the Future, One Child at a Time”*

Westford Elementary Schools

August 2019

Dear Families,

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 2019-2020 school year.

Sincerely,

Westford Public School Elementary Administrative Team

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DIRECTORY

SCHOOL	ADMINISTRATOR NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION
Abbot	Lori McDermott, Principal Carolyn Jerzylo, Assistant Principal	978 692-5580 <a href="#">School Website</a>
Crisafulli	Sharon Kennelly, Principal Scott Middlemiss, Assistant Principal	978 392-4483 <a href="#">School Website</a>
Day	Chris Louis Sardella, Principal Carolyn Shediak, Assistant Principal	978 692-5591 <a href="#">School Website</a>
Miller	Donna Pobuk, Principal Carolyn Shediak, 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>
Westford Pre-School	Nichole Callier, Pre-School Coordinator	978 692-5560 <a href="#">School Website</a>

## DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION

**Central Office 978-692-5560**

Superintendent of Schools, Everett V. Olsen, Jr.	Extension 2102
Assistant Superintendent, Kerry Clery, EdD	Extension 2104
Director of Pupil Services, Courtney Moran	Extension 2112
Title VI and Title IX Coordinator, Everett V. Olsen, Jr	Extension 2102
Homeless Coordinator/504 Cortney Moran	Extension 2112

**2019-2020 Westford School Committee**

Avery Adam

Megan Eckroth

Sean Kelly

Alicia Mallon

Gloria Miller

Chris Sanders

Mingquan Zheng

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS.....	10
AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.....	40
ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES.....	13
Absence Due to Family Vacation.....	15
Dismissals.....	15
Excused and Unexcused Absences.....	15
Observance of Religious Holidays.....	15
Parent/Guardian and School Responsibilities.....	13
Reporting Absence.....	14
Reporting Tardiness.....	14
Truancy.....	13
BULLYING.....	33
Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan.....	33
Definitions.....	34-35
Determination of Bullying.....	34
Harassment.....	35
Prohibition against Bullying and Retaliation.....	35
Relationship to Other Laws.....	37
Reporting Bullying or Retaliation.....	36
Taking Disciplinary Action.....	37
BUS POLICY.....	47
Criteria Used to Evaluate Bus Stop Safety.....	47
Bus Discipline.....	48
CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM.....	25
CORE VALUES.....	8
CORI.....	9
CRISIS INTERVENTION.....	39
EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY.....	48
DELAYED OPENING.....	15
DISCLAIMER.....	7
DISTRICT CONTACTS.....	2
DRESS CODE.....	31-32
EARLY RELEASE.....	16
ELL.....	17
FINGERPRINTING.....	9
FIELD TRIPS.....	21
FIRE ALARMS.....	35
HARASSMENT POLICY.....	38-39, 50
HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION.....	52
HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION.....	9
HOMEWORK.....	17
Expectations.....	18
Guidelines.....	18-20
Rationale/Purpose for Homework.....	17
Time and Responsibilities.....	16

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.....	43
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.....	21
LOCKERS.....	43
MANDATED REPORTING.....	41
MCAS TESTING.....	25
MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE	
ACT.....	43-45
MOTOR VEHICLE IDLING.....	46
NOTIFICATION OF NON-DISCRIMINATION.....	7
PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES.....	18
PHYSICAL RESTRAINT.....	45
PROGRESS REPORTS.....	18
SCHOOL CLOSING.....	16
SCHOOL DIRECTORY.....	2
SCHOOL HOURS.....	10
SCHOOL HEALTH.....	40
Emergency Cards.....	42
Field Trips.....	43
Mandated Screenings.....	42
Medication Information.....	41
Medical Exclusion from School.....	42
Physicals & Immunizations.....	41
SCHOOL COMMITTEE.....	3
SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.....	45-46
SPECIAL EVENTS.....	18
STUDENT CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE.....	26
Behavior.....	31
Bicycles/Skateboards/Scooters.....	30
Care of Building.....	29
Cell Phone Search.....	29
Code of Conduct.....	26
Discipline and Students with Disabilities.....	26-27
Dress Code.....	31-32
Indoor Recess.....	30
Items not Allowed.....	31
Outdoor Recess/Activities.....	30
Playground.....	29
Student Interactions.....	33
Student Expulsion and Suspension.....	38
STUDENT PUBLICATIONS.....	53
District Acceptable Internet Use.....	54
Personal Safety (Students only restrictions).....	54
Respect for Privacy.....	54
Illegal Activities.....	54
Environment Security.....	55
Inappropriate Language, Conduct, and Harassment.....	55
Truthfulness and Accuracy.....	55

Respecting Resource Limits.....	54
Student Release for Print and Electronic Publications.....	42
STUDENT RECORDS.....	22-25
TEXTBOOKS & EQUIPMENT.....	46
TRANSPORTATION .....	46
VISITORS.....	9
WEAPONS POLICY.....	49
WESTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT MOU.....	49
WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL CALENDAR.....	7

## **DISCLAIMER**

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

## **WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL CALENDAR** [District Calendar](#)

### **NOTIFICATION OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Westford Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, homelessness, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment in its programs and activities. The Westford Public Schools complies with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Massachusetts General Laws c. 71B; c. 76, §5; c. 151B; and c. 151C. At the District level, the ADA (employees), Title VI, and Title IX Coordinator is: Bill Olsen.

Bill Olsen, Superintendent of Schools  
Westford Public Schools  
23 Depot Street  
Westford, Massachusetts 01886  
978-392-5560 Ext. 2102

At the District level, the Section 504 (disability pertaining to students) and ADA (students) Coordinator is: Courtney Moran. Inquiries about these non-discrimination laws may be directed to the above-named Coordinators.



## 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> afety	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, parent nights, etc. The Superintendent of Schools will alert parents 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 with teacher.
3. Student/parent 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

### School Hours

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

Abbot	978-692-5580	Sarah Edgecomb Chris Roberge
Crisafulli	978-392-4483	Natalie Antell Jayne Locke
Day	978-692-5591	Elizabeth Sawyer Nanci DiNitto
Millennium Pre-School	978-692-5560, extension 2111	Zoe Daniel
Miller	978-392-4476	Sandra Brake Nanci DiNitto
Nabnasset	978-692-5583	JoAnn Webster Chris Roberge
Robinson	978 692-5586	Joann Beliveau Jayne Locke

## **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 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/guardians 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/guardians 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/Guardian and School Responsibilities**

Parents or guardians 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 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.

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, 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 parent’s ability to care for the child. A parent/guardian/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 parent or a police officer may file an application. M.G.L. c. 119, § 39L

### **Parent /Guardian Responsibility**

Parents or Guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. If a child fails to attend school for seven (7) day sessions or fourteen (14) half day sessions within the school year, the school will address the situation. 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/guardian of the attendance record. Following, a meeting will be conducted with the parents 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 guardian.

### **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/guardian 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/guardian 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/guardian 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 parental 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/guardian of the attendance record. Following, a meeting will be conducted with the parents 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 guardian 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/guardians 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 may expect to meet with the school principal.

#### **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/guardian to notify the teacher of these dates at the beginning of the school year.

### **Dismissal**

If a parent 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/guardian, and indicate whether it is a school lobby or car pick up.
- Parents 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**

Millenium Pre-School	1 hour delay	10:00 AM
Grade K-2 Schools:		
Miller, Nabnasset, Robinson	1 hour delay	10:05 AM
	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/teacher conferences. The district calendar may be accessed [here](#).

### **EARLY RELEASE**

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**

#### **Pre-School**

AM Pre-School 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM  
PM Pre-School No School

#### **Kindergarten**

AM Kindergarten 9:05 AM - 12:20 PM\*  
PM Kindergarten No School

#### **K-2**

9:05 AM- 12:20 PM

#### **3-5**

8:25 AM -11:40 AM

\*Morning Kindergarten is extended on Early Release Days with students riding home on the regular bus.

### **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 two hour delay, AM Kindergarten will be cancelled for that day. In the event of a delay or snow day the Early Arrival Program is not offered.

### **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:

- Afternoon kindergarten will be cancelled.
- 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 are encouraged to have a back up plan in case of an emergency school closing.

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

All parents 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 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 ([R6112](#)) 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.

**Time & 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.

**GUIDELINES**

<b>Time Expectations</b>	<b>Teacher Responsibilities</b>	<b>Student Responsibilities</b>	<b>Parent Responsibilities</b>
KINDERGARTEN	There will be no regularly assigned nightly HW. Teachers will provide students/families with	Students are encouraged to practice reading or listening to someone read to them	Parents are encouraged to incorporate the school-suggested activities with their child,

	suggestions on activities that will reinforce concepts taught in the classroom.	each night with an adult or older child.	when appropriate. Parents are encouraged to read with their child on a nightly basis.
<p>GRADE 1</p> <p>From 0 to 10 minutes per night</p> <hr/> <p>GRADE 2</p> <p>From 0 to 15 minutes per night</p>	<p>HW will be assigned with a greater emphasis on literacy and math.</p> <p>No HW will be assigned over weekends or school vacations/holiday breaks.</p>	HW is a cooperative effort between the parent and child.	HW is a cooperative effort between the parent and child. Parents are encouraged to designate an appropriate HW area with limited distractions for their child. Parents should stop 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.
<p>GRADE 3</p> <p>From 0 to 20 minutes per night</p>	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 are encouraged to designate an appropriate HW area with limited distractions for their child. Parents should ensure that the HW submitted to the teacher is a true reflection of the child's ability and/or understanding. Parents should assist child to ensure student's HW has been completed and is ready to be returned to school. Parents should stop 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.
<p>GRADE 4</p> <p>From 0 to 30 minutes</p>	In addition to focusing on literacy and math, there may be HW in other subject areas as well. In addition, long-term	HW is primarily the responsibility of the student. Students should complete HW on time and according to teacher	Parents are encouraged to assist child in making sure there is an appropriate HW area in the home. Parents should ensure that

per night  <hr/> GRADE 5  From 0 to 40 minutes per night	projects will be assigned. Homework expectations for long-term projects are included in the nightly maximum as well. No HW will be assigned over weekends or school vacations/holiday breaks.	guidelines. Students are responsible for obtaining from their teachers any missed assignments.	the HW submitted to the teacher is a true reflection of the child’s ability and understanding. Parents should assist child to ensure student’s HW has been completed and is ready to be returned to school. Parents should stop 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.
---	---	--	---

**PROGRESS REPORTS**

Our progress report provides parents 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/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Formal parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year. Conferences are scheduled in advance and each conference is allotted 15 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/teacher conference, [Tips for Parents](#).

**Westford Public School Policy References:**

Promotion and Retention of Students [P6109](#)

**Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks**

[Link to Department of Education](#)

**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 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/guardian 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 is 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/guardian'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 and student rights regarding their student records:

*Inspection of Record* – A parent/guardian, 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/guardian or eligible student within ten (10) days of the request,

unless the parent/guardian or eligible student consents to a delay. In the event the parent/guardian or eligible student requests copies of a student record, the District may charge the parent/guardian/eligible student for said copies at the District rate.

*Confidentiality of Record* – With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parent/guardian, 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/guardian or eligible student.

*Amendment of Record* – The parent/guardian and eligible students have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent/guardian and eligible students have the right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. The parent/guardian 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/guardian 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.

*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, parents 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.

*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/guardian 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 Parents* – Unless there is a court order to the contrary, a non-custodial parent (parent 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 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 by certified and first class mail that the records and information will be provided to the non-custodial parent in twenty one (21) calendar days unless the custodial parent provides documentation of the non-custodial parent's ineligibility to access such information. In all cases where school records are provided to a non-custodial parent, the electronic and postal address and any other contact information for the custodial parent shall be removed from the records provided. Any such records provided to the non-custodial parent 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 that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

**DIRECTORY INFORMATION (WPS Policy #6111)** - 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

Parents 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/guardian 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/guardian or eligible student shall not be necessary.

*Complaints* – A parent/guardian or eligible student has the right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-5920, telephone number (800) 872-5327 or with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148, telephone number (781) 338-3000. 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 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.

### **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 12 "change in placement", building administrators, the parent/guardian, 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/guardian, 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/guardian, 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/guardian 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.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES WHILE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

### **Behavior**

Consideration of others and cooperation with adults will help all children to have an enjoyable time at school. Problems are to be solved through discussion rather than through physical contact. An adult is always nearby to assist in conflict resolution. Through pupil and staff discussion, reasonable and appropriate guidelines for self-control and good citizenship will be reinforced. The majority of students are well behaved and rarely require disciplinary action. Teachers, administrators and staff will make every effort to resolve problems informally. If rules are disregarded, appropriate action will result through teacher and/or administrative involvement. The following actions are considered when school rules have been violated at the elementary level. The following consequences could result in:

1. Change of seating.
2. Discussion involving the school administration, child, teacher, supervisor and/or parent/guardian.
3. Recess period adjusted.
4. Lunch/Recess in the office.
5. Detention after school.
6. In-school suspension. The student is allowed to attend school, but is suspended from all classes and activities during the designated suspension.
7. Out of school suspension, this process includes short-term suspension:
  - 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 parents/guardians notified. A parent conference will be scheduled to discuss the decision.
  - The Westford School Committee will be alerted when a child receives a third short-term suspension. This may result in a review of the case by the School Committee with parents 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.

### **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.

### **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.

These 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.

The following playground behaviors are not allowed:

1. Fighting, shoving, tripping or knocking others down
2. Running near playground equipment

3. Tackle games
4. Jumping off or standing on swings, or improperly using monkey bars
5. Sitting or standing on parallel bars
6. Standing or walking up slides
7. Profanity or name-calling
8. Removing other's hats and gloves or taking other's property.
9. Winter: Throwing snowballs, sliding on icy patches or playing on snowbanks 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 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. Parents 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 place.
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.
4. Students are to ride on the right side of the road at all times.
5. 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 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

### **STUDENT DRESS**

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 or guardians 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, rather than school staff, the respective parent 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 Westford Public Schools Policy [5304](#)

Bullying is unfair, one-sided and repeated. 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.

## **WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS BULLYING PREVENTION 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, and guardians. 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 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 investigate promptly 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 or guardian 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**, is 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, parents or guardians, 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 or other non-school or district staff use 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 notice to parents 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 or guardian 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 or 37Hó, 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.

### **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 for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

**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 parents/guardians will be notified of the concern.
2. The parents/guardians will be asked to pick up their son/daughter from school.
3. The student will not be readmitted to school until the Principal has received 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 considered to be in an unassigned area 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 or guardian listed on the student emergency card. The student will remain in the clinic until the parent or guardian 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 a 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/legal guardians 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. Parents/legal guardians 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:
  1. Fever free x 24hrs (**without** fever reducing medicine such as Advil, ibuprofen, Tylenol, etc.)
  2. Well appearing
  3. On antibiotics x 12hrs 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/legal guardian. 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/guardian is necessary to participate. M.G.L. c. 71, § 32A notes that parents 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.

## **LOCKERS**

In accordance with The Westford Public Schools Policy # 5310.

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. The parent/legal guardians 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. Parents or Guardians 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/mv/>

### **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.

### **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 special classroom. Parents 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 parent(s). Upon receipt of the parent(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.

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. Parents and employees

can also file complaints with the 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 or guardians can make a hearing request with the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals at One Congress Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02114. Employees can also file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission located at John F. Kennedy Federal Building, 475 Government Center, Boston, MA 02203.

### **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.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **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.

#### **School Buses**

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 busses 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 busses.

### **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 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 parents 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.

## **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, guardian 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.

At any stage in the complaint process, the complainant has the right to file formal complaints with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02109-3291, (617) 289-0111, or with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, One Ashburton Place, Sixth Floor, Room 601, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 727-3990. For complaints of

discrimination on the basis of disability the complainant may also file a complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148, (617) 338-3300. Complaints of discrimination in employment practices may also be filed with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), JFK Federal Building, 475 Government Center, Boston, MA 02203-0506, (617) 565-3200.

### **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 weapon 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 Westford Public Schools Policy #5303:

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 individual.
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 parents when disciplinary action is not required may vary depending on the school level.
- Student may be disciplined.

At any stage in the complaint process, the complainant has the right to file formal complaints with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, 8th Floor, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02109-3291, (617) 289-0111, or with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, One Ashburton Place, Sixth Floor, Room 601, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 727-3990. For complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability the complainant may also file a complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148, (617) 338-3000 or may file a Request for Hearing with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Bureau of Special Education Appeals, One Congress Street, Boston, MA 02114, 617-626-7250. Complaints of discrimination in employment practices may also be filed with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), JFK Federal Building, 475 Government Center, Boston, MA 02203-0506, (617) 565-3200.

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 Westford Public Schools Policy #6201:

### **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 duration.

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 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 at:

<http://wa.westford12.us/pages/index>. 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/guardian written permission. The School Committee recognizes three levels of publishing audiences as defined in The Westford Public Schools Policy #6302 and 6115.

### **District Acceptable Internet Use**

In accordance with The Westford Public Schools Policy #6302:

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.

The Westford Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) shall be published in the school's Student Handbooks (#6302) 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. Parents shall submit to the school the appropriate acknowledgment form, verifying that they have reviewed the contents of the handbook with their child. Additionally, the AUP shall be published in staff handbooks.

### **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 parental 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.

### **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 user.