

# **Paxton Center School**

## **School Handbook**



**2011-2012**

## Paxton Center School Handbook

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## 2011-2012

### Greetings to all PCS students and families!

Welcome back to school. Paxton Center School Handbook contains important information for you and your parents. Please review this handbook carefully, and share it with your parents. Any community will have a set of rules and practices that help the community to run more smoothly. This handbook contains the procedures that will govern the school this year. It is your responsibility to review and understand the procedures. We want to promote mutual respect in a safe, yet challenging learning environment.

Best wishes for a successful school year,

Ms. Kathi McCollumn, Interim Principal

### Administrative Office

#### Wachusett Regional School District

Jefferson School  
1745 Main Street  
Jefferson, MA 01522  
(508) 829-1670

#### PAXTON CENTER SCHOOL

19 West Street

Paxton, Massachusetts 01612

Telephone: (508) 798-8576

District web site: [www.wrsd.net](http://www.wrsd.net)

Ms. Kathi McCollumn, Interim Principal

Mrs. Kellie O'Brien, Assistant Principal

Mrs. Debbie Norton, Secretary

Mrs. Nancy Glancy, Secretary

#### Kindergarten

Mrs. Cynthia Anderson

Mrs. Megan Bernier

Ms. Renee Rogers

#### Grade 1

Mrs. Karin Edwards

Mrs. MaryBeth Gallivan

Mrs. Amy Norton

#### Grade 2

Mrs. Megan Keller

Mrs. Jennifer Knowles

Mrs. Mary Kate Soter

#### Grade 3

Mrs. Kara Bolduc

Ms. Julie Collins

Mrs. Teresa Gaze

#### Grade 4

Mr. James Carlson

Mrs. Sandy Gregory

Mrs. Cynthia Moran

#### Grade 5

Mr. Gino DiGoia

Mrs. Bethany Killeen  
Mrs. Caitlyn Gentilucci

#### Grade 6

Mrs. Nancy Bik  
Mrs. Gaylene Buck  
TBD

#### Grades 7&8

Mrs. Melissa Zingarella (English)  
Mrs. Susanne Ekberg (French)  
Mr. Kieth Wolosz (Math)  
Mr. Ted Purcell (Science/Tech)  
Mrs. Stacia Smith (Social Studies)  
Mr. Scott Wahlstrom (Science)

#### Art Education

Mrs. Elizabeth Rauktis

#### Music Education

Mr. Bill Beck

#### Physical Education

Mr. Bill Sullivan Gymnasium

#### Speech/Language Specialist

Mrs. Stacy LePage

Ms. Danielle Burgess, Speech Assistant

#### School Psychologist

Dr. Patrice Gallagher

#### Special Education Resource

Mrs. Suzanne Gauvin

Mrs. June Shack

Mrs. Cathy Steiner

Mrs. Molly Domineck

#### Title I/ Literacy

Mrs. Chris Kiritsy

#### Computer/Technology

Mr. James McFadden

#### Library

Mrs. Becky Sullivan

#### Nurse, Health Services

Mrs. Sheila Lynch

#### School Cafeteria Services

Mrs. Diana Progri, Manager

Mrs. MaryAnn Savino

Mrs. Deb Mita

#### Custodial Services

Mr. Peter Heaney, Head Custodian

Mr. John Heikkila

Mr. Steve Lapomardo

Mr. Andrew Hakenson

## PAXTON CENTER SCHOOL MISSION

The **mission** of the Paxton Center School is to provide students in Kindergarten through Eighth grade the opportunity to achieve to their highest potential and to be instructed by highly qualified and dedicated staff members.

## PAXTON CENTER SCHOOL VISION

Our Vision is for every PCS student to graduate eighth grade with the skills and knowledge needed to attend high school without remediation and have the opportunity to pursue a path of their choice.

To achieve this the school will make certain that:

- All students receive standards-based instruction in all subject areas by highly qualified teachers
- All teachers focus their instruction on high quality student work that meets standards and provides differentiated opportunities
- Each student, regardless of their academic level when they entered the school, will leave eighth grade:
  - having met or exceeded state standards in all subject areas;
  - as a proficient reader and writer;
  - completing a service learning project
- All students are provided with a just, fair and caring learning environment that fosters confidence and a sense of belonging
- Every student will study a challenging curriculum that applies their learning to everyday situations, thereby enhancing students' social, emotional, and ethical development and deepening their commitment to values and good citizenship

## PAXTON CENTER SCHOOL CORE VALUES

The members of the Paxton Center School community will:

...Work in partnership in a supportive environment to develop a high level of proficiency in the core curriculum areas of our school. Teachers, students, support staff, administrators, parents and community members are accountable for their actions and will be responsive to the needs of others. All must measure their success according to established criteria.

...Work in partnership to provide individualized opportunities for all in an academically challenging environment to support life long learning. All students deserve the opportunity to reach their potential; therefore, the District will provide a wide range of opportunities, resources, and experiences in an equitable manner in all schools.

...Work in partnership to respect, accept and value diversity in ourselves and others, support the efforts of all and recognize the resulting accomplishments. In order to learn, students need to feel valued, safe, and secure. Respect, tolerance, and equal opportunity shall be promoted for all students and staff. Inappropriate and dangerous activities will not be tolerated.

**We believe** that each student and each teacher has the right:

1. To work in a pleasant, safe environment.
2. To create an atmosphere that encourages learning.
3. To expect freedom from harassment from others.

**We expect** that the staff at PCS will teach you how to learn. Your teachers will encourage you to think for yourself, to learn the art of asking useful questions, to seek answers on your own, and to study effectively. We will also emphasize the following skills:

1. organizing materials, time and information
2. knowing how and when to ask for help
3. listening carefully and following directions
4. beginning and completing an assignment or task
5. working independently and in groups on projects
6. using technology as a learning tool

## ACADEMICS

### **STUDY HABITS**

You are expected to give your best effort every day in school. Being a successful learner involves self-discipline and organization. Here are some hints that will help you to do well:

- Have your agenda book at all times. Write down all assignments.
- Be sure you understand the assignment. If you don't understand it, ask questions.
- Before leaving school, ask yourself what you need for homework, and take it home.
- Establish a special homework place in your home.

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework assignments are an extension of the classroom and a way to develop self-discipline and organizational skills.

1. Homework assignments may include:
  - a. drill and additional practice to reinforce and/or strengthen skills introduced in class
  - b. reading of assigned literature or text material
  - c. research activities to locate information
  - d. studying for quizzes and tests
  - e. writing assignments
  - f. long-term reports or projects
2. Since people study in different ways, the time spent on an assignment may differ from student to student. The key is to organize your time well. As a general rule, the amount of homework assigned daily will require approximately 10 minutes per year of grade, such as 10 minutes in grade 1 and 50 minutes in grade 5.
3. You, the student are responsible for assignments. Work is expected to be completed and passed in on time. You are responsible for getting make-up work for assignments missed due to a one or two day absence.
4. For absences of 3 or more days, parents may call and request homework to be collected.
5. You are responsible for bringing your homework to school on time. Do not expect your parents to bring your work to school.

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

Students who have been absent or who are doing poorly in a subject must assume the responsibility for making up work and/or asking for extra help. If a student is absent for a prolonged period of time, he/she will be given an adequate amount of time to makeup the work missed. If your child is absent for one or two days, please have him/her call a classmate to find out the missing assignments.

### **EXTRA HELP**

Initiative for obtaining extra help rests with the student but should be encouraged by parents or guardians. Teachers are available for extra help and will explain to the students their extra help practices.

**ENRICHMENT:** (policy 3611.4) The Wachusett Regional School Committee is committed to providing a high quality education for all students with the goal of maximizing the performance and achievement of every individual. Staff is encouraged and expected to use innovative teaching implementing the district curriculum in creative and flexible ways.

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

Wachusett Regional School District shall:

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

### ACCIDENT INSURANCE COVERAGE

The Wachusett School Department sponsors a student-participation insurance plan. Brochures describing the plans available will be distributed during the first week of school.

## ATTENDANCE

Consistent attendance is a prerequisite for maximum student achievement. Parents and students have a shared responsibility for attendance. If your child will not be attending school, parents must call the school between 7:15 and 8:15 A.M. to inform us as student safety and supervision are our top priority. Students arriving late, leaving and returning during the school day, and being dismissed early are disruptive to the academic well-being of all involved, including your child. You are encouraged to schedule all medical and dental appointments, personal business, and vacations outside of school hours.

### **TRUANCY**

Any student who is absent from school for all or part of the school day without the knowledge and consent of his/her parents shall be considered truant. Truant students will be subject to disciplinary action by the school or court system and will be required to make up all class time missed.

### **DISMISSAL**

Students being dismissed early must have a written parental note stating the specific dismissal time desired, reason for early dismissal and who will be coming for the student. This note must be presented to the homeroom teacher. Parents are to report to the office to sign the child out before pick up. Please do not call the office to have your child ready for dismissal. **CHILDREN WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO GO HOME WITH ANOTHER CHILD OR ADULT WITHOUT WRITTEN CONSENT FROM THEIR PARENT.**

### **TARDINESS**

Homeroom begins at 8:25 a.m. and students prepare for the start of the day. Any student who arrives to school after 8:25 a.m. is required to report to the office for a late pass. You are allowed three excused tardies per term which must be verified by a note or phone call from a parent/guardian on that day. Each tardy beyond the three allowed per term will result in disciplinary action.

### **HOMEWORK REQUESTS FOR PLANNED EXTENDED ABSENCES**

Extended absences from school for vacations usually have a negative effect on student performance and are not condoned as a reasonable excuse for being absent from school. If a student chooses to vacation during a regular school week, teachers are not required to provide work. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with each teacher to make up all assignments.

## BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE

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

The principal will be responsible for administering behavior and discipline procedures at the school in accordance with District policy and school procedures.

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

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

1. Age of the student;
2. Mitigating circumstances;
3. Previous behavior of the student; and
4. Attitude of the student.

### **DISCIPLINE**

To provide an appropriate academic and social environment certain basic codes of conduct are necessary. All students are expected to show respect and concern for the rights and property of others. The school has the authority to discipline students for inappropriate behavior off-campus, at school-related functions or any other type of activity reasonably related to school activities. Students who break the basic codes of conduct are subject to one or more of the following disciplinary actions to be taken by the school at either the teacher or the administrative level.

Due Process – Paxton Center School management policies are based upon a firm belief that all students have a right to a quality education and that this right should not be infringed upon in any way. Administrators are here to help you out if a problem arises. Under school rules, all students at PCS are guaranteed due process.

Due process in the case of suspension requires the following:

1. For disciplinary action up to and including 10 days of suspension
  - Oral notice of the charge (telephone notification to parents);
  - An explanation of the evidence
  - The opportunity for the student to present his/her side of the story to an administrator.
2. For disciplinary action of more than 10 days/expulsion
  - Written notice of opportunity for a hearing;
  - Written notice of the charges (telephone notification to parents with written copy of the charges mailed to student's parents or guardian);
  - The right to be represented by a lawyer or an advocate;
  - Adequate time to prepare for a hearing;
  - Access to documented evidence and opportunity to present witnesses and evidence in his/her behalf;
  - The right to question witnesses; and
  - A written decision including the specific grounds for the decision;
  - Any student expelled from school by the principal shall have the right to appeal the decision to the superintendent of schools.

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

Consequences for Violations of School Rules – When school rules are violated, the following may be implemented:

- Informal talk: a staff member will talk to the student to reach an agreement regarding future behavior.
- Conference: a formal conference with a school official, the student, and possibly a parent in which the student agrees to correct the questionable behavior.
- Detention: the student reports after school from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Detention may be assigned by the office or by a teacher. The student will be given notice of the detention and the parent must sign the detention form.
- Loss of Privilege: the student may be denied participation in extra-curricular activities; may be removed from the cafeteria for an extended period of time; or may be denied the opportunity to participate in special events.
- School Service: the student may be assigned to perform school service in place of other penalties. Such service may include projects that assist in the operation of the school community.
- In-School Suspension: the student is excluded from one or more classes, but remains at school and is expected to complete the day's assignments. If a student receives an in-school suspension, he/she is required to report to school. Parents will be notified. No extra-curricular activities allowed for days of suspension.
- Out-of-School Suspension: a student must remain off school property during the period of suspension. The student will be allowed to make up any work missed during the period of suspension. Written notification of the charges will be given to the student and the parents. The student and/or the parent may have the opportunity for a hearing within three days. No extra-curricular activities allowed for days of suspension.
- Juvenile Courts: the administration will use the court system to work with students who are habitual school offenders or with students who have excessive absences from school.
- Behavioral Contracts: in order to address inappropriate behaviors on the part of individual students, some students and their parents will be required to sign contracts outlining specific behaviors expected of students and the consequences that will follow if these behavioral expectations are not met.
- Exclusion/Expulsion: This will be used as a disciplinary measure in extreme and chronic behavioral situations. This may include situations such as possession/use of weapons; assaults; possession, sale or use of an illegal substance; or other serious offenses.

### **BEHAVIOR CODE VIOLATIONS**

**DRUGS AND ALCOHOL:** student found in possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia, alcohol or alcohol-related products will be suspended and may be subject to expulsion. Students with substance abuse problems will be encouraged to enroll in an appropriate substance abuse program. *See WRSDC Policy # 6433 on p. 19 of this handbook.*

**TOBACCO PRODUCTS, LIGHTERS, MATCHES:** This offense will result in suspension from school. Paxton Center is a SMOKE-FREE environment in compliance with Massachusetts General Laws.

**FIGHTING:** Offenses will result in parent notification, possible suspension from school. Subsequent offenses - increased suspension from school and could result in expulsion. If a student is hit, pushed or provoked he/she should tell a staff member immediately. A student who hits another student, even if that student hit him/her first will be disciplined. We have a no tolerance for violence policy that includes everyone.

**DAMAGE TO PROPERTY:** Students found damaging or defacing school property will be made to clean or replace damaged property. Parents will be contacted and, when necessary, billed for the damage. Possible suspension from school will result.

**HARASSMENT:** See WRSDC Policy # 6437 Promoting Civil Rights and Prohibiting Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination and Hate Crimes on p. 12 of this handbook. See WRSDC Policy # 6434 Sexual Harassment on p.15 of this handbook.

**DISTRIBUTION AND USE OF INDECENT LITERATURE:** First offense - parent notification, possible suspension from school. Subsequent offenses - increased suspension from school.

**INAPPROPRIATE/VULGAR LANGUAGE:** Detention or in-school suspension. Subsequent offenses-suspension from school.

**GROSS DISRESPECT AND INSUBORDINATION:** First offense-parent notification, possible suspension from school. Subsequent offenses - increased suspension from school.

**STEALING:** First offense - parent notification, possible suspension from school. Subsequent offenses - increased suspension from school.

**CHEATING:** PCS strives to create an environment that nurtures character development and integrity. This environment thrives on honesty and trust. Cheating includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Copying from someone else
- Letting someone else copy from you
- Talking, gesturing, or using cheat notes of any kind during a quiz
- Passing test information from one class to members of another class
- Plagiarizing-submitting someone else's work as your own

Cheating is unfair to the other students, the teachers, the school community, and especially yourself. Cheating is a serious offense which will result in a zero on the assignment, possible detention, in-school suspension, or suspension depending on the nature of the offense at the discretion of the administration.

**FORGERY:** PCS strives to communicate student progress to parents. When a student copies a parent's or teacher's signature, this is a forgery which is dishonest and interferes with the need to communicate. Any student who forges any signature will receive an in-school suspension. Subsequent offenses will result in increased suspensions and consequences.

**WEAPONS:** ***WEAPONS*** WRSDC Policy # 6435

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

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

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

2. Violations of this policy may lead to expulsion under the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 Section 37H. Procedures for enforcement shall be contained in the Student Discipline Code.

3. In addition to the school discipline indicated in the Student Discipline Code, provided in paragraph B., appropriate criminal action shall be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 269, section 10.

4. The weapons policy and regulations shall be implemented in accordance with the due process provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws and the Code of Massachusetts Regulations of the Department of Education, and the Student Discipline Code.

**WEAPONS/CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE POLICY:**  
**SUBSTANCE ABUSE** WRSDC Policy # 6433

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

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

Further, any student may be barred from a school-sponsored activity if there is reason to believe he/she has been drinking alcoholic beverages or using illegal substances prior to his/her attendance at or participation in said school-sponsored

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

The District shall provide full cooperation with legal authorities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**EXPULSIONS:** Expulsion shall be considered an action of last resort when the behavior of the student warrants such action at the discretion of the school principal. The expulsion shall be governed by Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 71, sections 37h and 37h 1/2, and Ch. 76 section 17.

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

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

**CORPORAL PUNISHMENT:** Corporal punishment is prohibited.

### **BUS DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES AND CONSEQUENCES**

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

#### **LEVEL 1**

<u>Misbehaviors</u>	<u>Consequences</u>
Misbehaviors that interfere with the orderly transportation of students. Some examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talking too loudly</li></ul>	The bus driver may address the misbehavior: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Verbal warning issued to student</li><li>• Assign seats</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to stay seated</li> <li>• Littering on the bus</li> <li>• Tampering with the possessions of other passengers</li> </ul>	
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**LEVEL 2**

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

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

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

**CAFETERIA**

The school cafeteria is maintained as a vital part of the health program of the school. To encourage good nutrition, a well balanced lunch is offered daily for \$2.50 and milk only for \$.50 per carton. Menus will be sent home monthly and also published in The Landmark and PCS web site. For nutritional reasons, it is expected that every child have something to eat at lunch time. Students who forget their lunch money will be allowed to receive an IOU from the kitchen. The student must then repay the kitchen. Student accounts must be kept in good standing at all times.

**FREE & REDUCED PRICE MEALS:** Applications for free milk and free or reduced price meals will be sent home with each student at the beginning of the school year. These applications are available at all times in the school office.

**CAFETERIA RULES:** The following cafeteria rules are enforced to keep a clean and safe lunchroom:

1. Do not take food from another student's tray.
2. Dispose of trash and recyclables appropriately.
3. Pick up any paper or food around your seat.
4. Speak in conversational tones.
5. Minimize out of seat to trash or bathroom needs.
6. All food and beverages are to be consumed in the cafeteria.

**NUTRIKIDS:** Pre-pay for your children's lunch through NutriKids. You can set up an account in the MyNutrikids.com and view transactions and balances of your child even if you are not interested in the online prepay. The system will also alert low balances via email.

#### **CELL PHONES, IPODS & OTHER ELECTRONICS**

Students are strongly encouraged not to bring iPods, CD players, stereos, video games, cell phones or similar items to school because they disrupt the educational process. Light Pens or Laser Lights are not allowed in school for safety reason. Personal items such as these if brought to school are the sole responsibility of the student. Any cell phones or iPods brought to school by students are to be kept OFF and in students' book bags or locker during the school day. Students may NOT use cell phones during the school day to send or receive calls, send or receive text messages, or take photographs or videos (including the bus ride). Cell phones may only be used before and after school hours. Any cell phone or iPod found to be visible or in use during the school day will be confiscated and brought to the office for safe-keeping. A warning will be given to first-time offenders and the phone returned at the end of the day. A second offense will result in confiscation and the device will only be released to a parent or guardian. A third offense will result in detention and the device will only be released to a parent or guardian. Further offenses could result in suspension and/ or a parent meeting. If these items are lost, damaged or stolen, the sole responsibility for addressing these circumstances belongs to the student and parent.

#### **CHILD FIND**

The Wachusett Regional School District wishes to identify all children, ages three years to twenty-one years, who reside within the District, have not yet graduated from high school, and who are in need of special education and related services. Any child suspected of having a disability and believed to be in need of special education and related services may be referred to the Administrator of Special Education Services, Wachusett Regional School District, Jefferson School, 1745 Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522 (508-829-1670 X237).

#### **COMMUNICATION / SCHOOL & HOME**

Communication between the school and parents is very important. The school has several ways to communicate school activities and information directly to parents. The school has a web site at [www.wrsd.net](http://www.wrsd.net). All staff have e-mail and addresses are posted on our web site. The principal will use Connect-Ed to leave a phone message to inform you of upcoming events such as report cards and school dances, as well as notification of events at the school that may be of parent concern. Parents are encouraged to communicate with staff and administration with any concerns that you may have.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The Wachusett Regional School District shall encourage communication between and among school personnel, students, and parents. The Committee recognizes that circumstances may arise when a student with a personal or medical problem may seek help from a member of the faculty or administration. In such instances, the Committee will respect the confidentiality of communications between student and teacher, counselor, nurse or administrator. However, it is not the intention of this statement of policy to encourage interference with parental or legal authority. (*WRSDC Policy 6650*)

**ANNUAL NOTIFICATION LETTER TO STUDENTS & PARENTS ON STUDENTRECORDS, INTERNET DISCLOSURE:** In accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Education Student Record Regulations, Wachusett Regional School District shall:

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

Regulations on Student Records and this policy annually.

Regulations:

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

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

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school system about the student. This may include such things as standardized test results class rank, school sponsored extra-curricular activities, and evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons. The temporary record is destroyed seven years after the student leaves the school system.

*Inspection of Record* – A parent, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least fourteen (14) years old, has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent or student within ten (10) days of the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. In the event the parent/student requests copies of a student record, the District may charge the parents/student for said copies at the District rate.

*Confidentiality of Record* – No individuals or organizations are allowed to have access to information in the student record without specific, informed, written consent of the parent, legal guardian, or student of legal age. Exceptions include only those state agencies that specifically are authorized to request student information.

According to federal law, the District is required to release names, addresses, and telephone listings of students to military recruiters and institutions of higher learning upon request for recruitment and scholarship purposes without prior consent. Parents and eligible students have the right to request that this information not be released without their consent by notifying their school building office in writing. At the beginning of each school year, parents will be mailed a form to complete, indicating their choice to give or withhold their consent to release information.

The District Administration shall not release a student's social security number or date and place of birth to anyone except as required by law.

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

parent and student have a right to a conference with the school principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system.

*Destruction of Records* – The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed a certain period of time after the student leaves the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. Before any such information may be destroyed, the parent and student must be notified, and have an opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before its destruction. (*WRSDC Policy 6910*)

Consistent with the Education Reform Act, the District will transfer a student's record to a new school outside of the Wachusett Regional School District without prior consent required from the parent of eligible student.

### **DISCRIMINATION**

This is to notify all students that the Wachusett Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, in the operation of the educational programs, activities, or employment policies; further no person will be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to its public schools, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public schools on account of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

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

At the District level, the ADA (disability pertaining to non-students,) Title VI and Title IX (race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, and sexual orientation) Coordinator is: Susan Sullivan, Director of Human Resources, Wachusett Regional School District, Jefferson School, 1745 Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522 (508-829-1670.)

At the District level, the ADA and Section 504 (disability pertaining to students) Coordinator is: Nancy Houle, Ph.D, Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services, Wachusett Regional School District, Jefferson School, 1745 Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522 (508-829-1670 X238.)

Also found in this handbook is a Grievance Procedure. The purpose of this grievance procedure is to allow any citizen to be heard and recorded regarding any complaints of violations of this policy.

**TOLERANCE:** The Wachusett Regional School Committee shall provide a learning environment that promotes and encourages an appreciation of diversity. Individual differences of students are to be appreciated and respected within district policies and regulations. All students can expect to grow and learn without encountering harassment about individual differences. Intolerable activities include but are not limited to harassment about race, gender, sexual orientation, handicap,

religion, ethnic group, appearance, dress, learning style, interests, or behaviors. Bullying will not be tolerated. Bullying behaviors include but are not limited to teasing, verbal harassment, unwanted touches, physical attacks, and/or ostracism. Reports of such conduct will be investigated and action will be taken under the guidelines of an individual school's disciplinary code.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR TITLE VI, TITLE IX, AND SECTION 504 (FEDERAL LAWS) AND CHAPTER 622 (STATE LAW):**

### **Statement of Definition**

A grievance is any alleged violation of the Wachusett District School Committee Policy on Non-Discrimination (#P6631) on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, in the operation of the educational programs, activities, or employment policies.

### **Grievance Procedure**

#### **Step #1**

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

#### **Step #2**

If a satisfactory solution is not achieved at step #1, the aggrieved party may, within fifteen (15) days upon receiving the decision rendered at step #1, file the alleged grievance with the Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services (for disability) or the Director of Administration Services (for all others), who shall respond in writing and meet with the aggrieved party in an attempt to resolve the alleged grievance within fifteen (15) days.

#### **Step #3**

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

### **Statement**

1. An aggrieved party, if not satisfied with the decision of the school committee, may refer the case to the Massachusetts State Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Department of Education, John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House, Room 701, Boston, MA 02109 (617-223-9662).

3. It is the intention of this grievance procedure to render due process regarding complaints or violations of this policy at each step of this grievance procedure.

## **DRESS CODE AND APPEARANCE**

We take pride in the appearance of our students. Students are expected to dress and groom themselves neatly in attire suitable for each school day. Use sound judgment when choosing clothes for school. Any manner of dress that is disruptive to the educational process will not be tolerated. Failure to adhere to these standards will result in immediate removal from class until the student is properly attired. Subsequent dress code violations will require further consequences.

The following are not acceptable school attire during school and school activities:

- Hats, cloth bandannas, and chains.
- Any apparel which makes reference to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, profanity, violence or apparel with offensive words or pictures.
- Items that are distracting, revealing, or educationally disruptive including sunglasses, mesh, see-through clothing, bare midriffs, exposed cleavage, exposed undergarments, tank tops, tube tops, spaghetti straps (2 inch strap width is a good rule of thumb), low rider slacks, muscle shirts, and short shorts or skirts (A good rule of thumb for shorts and skirts is that when the child extends his/her arm at his/her side, the shorts or skirt's hem should approximate the tips of the fingers).

## **EVACUATION DRILLS**

Drills are held regularly to insure the safety of all persons in the event of fire or disaster. Students are instructed in exits used, procedure for leaving the building, areas in which to assemble, and procedure in returning to the building. Periodic checks by the Paxton Fire Department are conducted.

## **EXTRA CURRICULAR**

### **INTERSCHOLASTIC/INTRAMURAL SPORTS**

PCS Middle School students are invited to try out for a number of WRSD seasonal sports. Additionally, Middle school students are asked to participate in other after school activities.

1. Academic Requirements: Students must pass all subjects as reported on the most recent formal communication with parents. Waivers may occasionally be granted upon the recommendation of the Principal.
2. Behavioral Requirements: Students must demonstrate appropriate behavior according to school standards. At the sole discretion of the Principal, a student may be declared ineligible for participation due to chronic misbehavior or an incident of serious or major misconduct according to school standards.

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

4. Physical Fitness: A note from the student's physician that the student has had a physical in the past thirteen months or 395 days and is not restricted in any way from participating in the program is required. Students wishing to try out for a school sponsored athletic activity must either complete a school physical or one provided by their own private physician. School sponsored physicals will be done for Paxton Center students in early September. Students are not allowed to tryout unless this requirement is fulfilled.

### **STUDENT COUNCIL**

The Student Council is the student-elected governing body through which the students may express their opinions, assist in the administration for the school and participate in the management of school enterprises. Students in grades 5 through 8 are eligible to run for Student Council. Two eighth graders serve on the District Student Council.

### **STUDENT ACTIVITY FEE SCHEDULE:**

The Wachusett Regional School Committee is committed to providing support to students for participation in activities throughout the region. An activity shall be defined as any discretionary or elective function or program. From time to time it may be necessary to establish fee schedules to support those activities.

Fees may be charged only for those activities in which the student is to participate. Money received from fees is to be used for stated purpose. Established fee schedules should not exceed projected costs. A sliding fee schedule may be established for students and family members participating in multiple fee charging activities within a school site. Provisions are to be made for students unable to pay the fee. Periodic report on funds will be submitted to keep the Committee and public apprised of student activity revenue and expenses. Each school shall prepare and make available to Committee, parents and participants a financial plan, the previous end of the year revenue and expense report, a projected budget for the coming year, and a copy of the established fee schedule. All fees received and distributed shall be administered through the District financial of Massachusetts General Law.

*(WRSDC Policy 425)*

### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:**

Students participating in extra-curricular activities must demonstrate appropriate behavior according to school standards. Only PCS students are allowed to attend dances. Guests are always welcome at concerts and school plays that are open to the public.

Students must be picked up from these after-school activities within fifteen minutes of the conclusion of the activity (unless special arrangements have been made in advance.) Students who are not picked up within the 15 minutes time frame may be excluded from the next like event at the school.

### **ATTENDANCE AT AFTER SCHOOL EVENTS:**

A student must attend school the day he/she plans to attend any after school or evening event.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

### **DAYTIME FIELDTRIPS**

Field trips are scheduled throughout the school year. These are designed to supplement the curriculum and to introduce students to the resources of the region. Parents will receive notices of field trips well in advance of the scheduled trip date and will be asked to sign field trip permission forms. Students who have demonstrated repeated inappropriate behavior may not be allowed to participate. School work will be provided for students who are not participating in a field trip. Parents/guardians may be asked to attend as chaperones, but only if a current CORI is available in the office for each chaperone.

### **FIELD TRIPS INVOLVING LATE NIGHT OR OVERNIGHT TRAVEL:**

The Wachusett Regional School District encourages field trips, which enhance the students' educational experience. In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37N, if field trips involve late night or overnight travel, the following must be met:

#### **A. Trip Approval Process:**

1. Advance approval by the Superintendent and/or designee will be required for any student trip involving late night or overnight travel (in concurrence with P3321 Policy Relating to Education Field Trips).
2. The approval process will be completed prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip.

3. Overnight trips must offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. Such trips must be appropriate for the grade level and must meet Time on Learning requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Education.

4. Teachers and other school staff will be prohibited from soliciting privately run trips through the school system. The trip approval process applies only to school-sanctioned trips; trips will not be approved that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.

5. Policies and procedures for trip approval will take into account all logistical details involving security arrangements, emergency management and communications protocols, transportation, accommodations, itinerary, fundraising required of students, the educational value of the trip in relation to its costs, and recommendation of the principal.

#### B. Transportation:

1. The use of vans or private automobiles for trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel should generally be avoided. Should the use of vans be necessary for overnight travel, prior written authorization from the Superintendent and subsequent approval by the School Committee must be obtained. Such trips should generally use commercial motor coaches. No student drivers will be allowed at any time.

2. Trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel will involve pre-trip checks for companies, drivers, and vehicles. Companies must have liability insurance on drivers.

3. School officials will ensure that the selected carrier is licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The District should not contract with any carrier that has an FMCSA safety rating of "conditional" or "unsatisfactory".

4. The contract with the carrier must prohibit the use of a subcontractor unless sufficient notice is given to the District to allow for verification of the subcontractor's qualifications.

#### C. Trip Scheduling

1. Overnight accommodations will be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Hiring independent security is recommended when appropriate.

2. Field trips during school time must meet the Massachusetts Department of Education Time on Learning requirements.

3. Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements and common sense. Student vehicular (bus and auto) travel between the hours of midnight and

6:00 AM is prohibited.

4. If substantially all members of a class are participating in a field trip, the school will provide appropriate substitute activities for any students not participating.

#### D. Fundraising

1. The amount of time to be devoted to fundraising should be reasonable and commensurate with students' obligations for homework, after-school activities, and jobs.

2. Group fundraising activities are preferred.

#### E. Student Supervision

1. Students shall be accompanied by a sufficient number of chaperones, taking into account the trip scheduling and logistics. All chaperones, including parents and volunteers, must have a CORI/criminal record check. Faculty and staff of the school will serve as chaperones whenever possible.

2. A chaperone must always be present whenever students are on the bus.

3. All participating students must submit a signed parent/guardian permission form. Such forms shall include eligibility requirements and appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication.

4. When away from school, all school rules will apply to the trip.

5. Infringement of rules may result in a student's immediate expulsion from the trip. In such cases, parents will be financially responsible for transportation home.

*(WRSDC Policy 3321.1)*

### **SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973**

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

Further information may be obtained from your school's principal, or Nancy Houle, the District's Section 504 Coordinator.

### **GRADES AND REPORT CARDS**

Report cards will be distributed four (4) times a year at approximately 10 week intervals. Interim reports are issued in grades 5-8 half way through each marking period. The purpose of the report is to notify the student and parents of academic progress. Progress reports will be sent home with each student.

PCS Honor Roll is published each quarter for students in grades 6-8. High Honor Roll is all "A's" and Honor Roll is all "A's" and "B's" in all subjects. Academic achievement is recognized throughout the school year in a variety of ways.

**INCOMPLETE GRADES:** A student who receives an incomplete grade on his/her report card, will have

two (2) weeks to makeup the work.

**CONFERENCES:** Individual teacher conferences may be requested directly by phone or email with the teacher.

**POWERSCHOOL PARENT ACCESS TO STUDENT GRADES** (for grades 5-8)

The Wachusett Regional School District utilizes PowerSchool, a student information management system. PowerSchool also has a parent component that allows parents access to their child(ren)'s grades via a secure internet site. Parent access and login information will be mailed home with the welcome back letter. If needed, PCS will provide training for parents in mid September. It is important to note that reporting of grades is the final step in assessing a student. Teachers are only required to report grades two times per marking period (progress report time and report card time). The Administration reserves the right to revoke parent access to PowerSchool if it is misused.

**GRADE EIGHT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

An eighth grade student who receives more than one (1) failing final average in any subject area will be ineligible for a diploma and will not be allowed to participate in graduation activities.

**HANDBOOK**

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

1. Student rights and responsibilities;
2. Student behavior and discipline; and
3. Glossary of terms.

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

**HARASSMENT AND BULLYING**

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

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

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

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

**Student and Staff Responsibilities**

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

**Reporting Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination or Hate Crimes**

Students can report any case of harassment, bullying, discrimination or hate crimes to any adult in the school who is then responsible to inform the building principal or designee. The school principal or designee is responsible for receiving reports

and complaints of violations at the school level. At the District level, the District Equity Coordinator is responsible for receiving and addressing reports or complaints of violations of this Policy

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

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

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

#### Reporting Other Incidences

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

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

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

#### Protection Against Retaliation

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

#### Ensuring Safety During Investigation

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

#### Determination of Proceedings

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

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

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

- the allegation is serious enough that it appears to place the complainant or any other person at physical risk;
- the incident has resulted in a criminal charge;

- the incident involves a referral to the Department of Social Services;
- the allegation involves a serious form of harassment, discrimination or retaliation;
- the allegation involves bullying, where the District has intervened with the alleged student offender under the Code of Conduct for bullying on two prior occasions;
- there is a pending Formal Proceeding against the subject of the complaint;
- the subject of the complaint has previously been found to have violated this Policy after Formal Proceedings, or
- that a formal proceeding is otherwise appropriate under the circumstances, the designated official must then commence a Formal Proceeding.

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

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

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

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

#### Violations

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

#### False Reports

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

#### Discipline

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

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

## Oversight

The District has designated the Director of Student/Information Services as the District Equity Coordinator. The Equity Coordinator will, under the supervision of the Superintendent of Schools, ensure the successful administration of and compliance with this Policy. Information including the name of the Equity Coordinator, his/her mailing address, telephone number and email address will be posted prominently in the District office as well as all school buildings within the District.

*\*\*Information from Attorney General Thomas Reilly's Safe Schools Initiative Sample Policy for Promoting Civil Rights and Prohibiting Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination and Hate Crimes, June 24, 2005, was used in drafting this document.*  
WRSDC Policy 6437

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

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

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

### A. Definitions

**Bullying**: The repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this policy, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

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

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

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

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

**Local law enforcement agency**: local police department(s)

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

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

### B. Policy Jurisdiction

For purposes of this policy, bullying is prohibited:

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

C. Reporting Requirements

In furtherance of this policy and in accordance with M.G.L. c.71, §37O, a school staff member, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional, will immediately report to the school principal any instance of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation that the staff member has witnessed or has become aware of.

D. Investigations

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

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

E. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent will develop and implement a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in District schools.

(i) Development of the Plan

The plan shall be developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. The consultation shall include notice and a public comment period. The plan shall be updated biennially.

(ii) Contents of the Plan

The District-wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall include:

- (a) descriptions of and statements prohibiting bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation;
- (b) procedures for students, staff, parents, guardians, and others to report bullying or retaliation;
- (c) a provision that reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously but that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- (d) a provision that a student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action;
- (e) procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation;
- (f) information regarding the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against an aggressor;
- (g) a provision for assessing and monitoring the target's need and the needs of witnesses for protective interventions;
- (h) procedures for notifying the parents of a target and of an aggressor of the investigative findings and actions to be taken;
- (i) provision for the notification of local law enforcement agencies if the principal reasonably believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor;
- (j) provision for annual and ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development training shall be in accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c.71,§37O; and
- (k) provision for the implementation of an evidenced-based anti-bullying curriculum in grades K-12 and for informing parents regarding the curriculum contents and strategies for reinforcing the curriculum at home.

(iii) Implementation of the Plan

The school principal shall be responsible for implementing and adhering to the District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan within his/her school.

(iv) Public Notice

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

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

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

**Definition** - The legal definition of sexual harassment is: Unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

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

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

- Touching (arm, breast, buttocks, shoulders, etc.)
- Verbal comments (about parts of the body, what type of sex victim would "be good at," clothing, looks, etc.)
- Name calling (from "honey" to "bitch" and worse)
- Starting and repeating sexual rumors
- Leers and stares
- Sexual or "dirty" jokes
- Cartoons, pictures and pornography
- Using the computer to leave sexual messages or graffiti, or to play sexually offensive computer games
- Gestures
- Pressure for sexual activity
- Cornering, blocking, standing too close, following
- Conversations that are too personal
- "Rating" and individual--for example, on a scale of 1 to 10
- Obscene t-shirts, hats, or pins
- Showing inappropriate videos and other materials during class
- Sexual assault and attempted sexual assault
- Massaging the neck, massaging the shoulders
- Touching oneself sexually in front of others
- Graffiti
- Making kissing sounds or smacking sounds, licking the lips suggestively
- Howling, catcalls, whistles
- Repeatedly asking someone out when he/she is not interested
- Pulling down someone's pants or forcibly removing other articles of clothing
- Facial expressions (winking, kissing, etc.)
- "Slam books" (lists of students' names with derogatory sexual comments written about them by other students)

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

1. Speak or send a note to any employee of the school district whom you trust, (i.e. nurse, psychologist/counselor, teacher, principal, assistant principal, superintendent, etc.) You can also speak to your parents who can then notify the superintendent, principal or assistant principal. Remember that the complaint procedure does not start until school/district personnel receive the complaint.
2. Within two school days of receipt of the verbal complaint, the employee will notify the principal/superintendent, and your parent/guardian will be notified of the pending complaint.
3. If you have not or do not want to put the complaint in writing, the employee will do so. This should be done no later than two (2) school days after you have talked, or given the note, to the employee. The complaint has to be put in writing to make sure that the employee fully and correctly understands the issue(s). A copy of the complaint, in writing, will be reviewed with you and your parent/guardian to ensure accuracy, before it is shared with the subject of the complaint.

4. The employee will refer the written complaint to the principal/superintendent. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may speak with you to get more information. In any case, the principal/superintendent or his/her designee will speak to the person who is alleged to have sexually harassed you (called the “respondent”) to obtain information as well.

a. If the principal/superintendent feels that the complaint can be resolved without a formal investigation, he/she may use the informal procedure. The informal procedure simply attempts to resolve the situation and can be done in many ways.

Examples are:

- The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have a conversation between you and the respondent where you can tell the respondent that the behavior bothers you and must stop.
- The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have you write a letter to the respondent saying that the behavior bothers you and must stop.
- The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have separate conversations with you and the respondent.

Examples of possible resolutions are as follows:

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

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

#### Formal Procedure:

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

- a. You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent ask that the formal procedure be used;
- b. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee decides that the formal procedure should be used; or
- c. You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent feels that the informal procedure was not helpful or adequate and one of the parties requests, within (5) school days that the formal procedure be used.

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

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

- All facts and circumstances of the incident;
- A summary of the investigation, which will include interviews with anyone reasonably believed to have relevant information, namely, the individual filing the complaint, the respondent, and, if either party is under the age of 18, their parents (if appropriate,) witnesses, and anyone else who may have experienced similar conduct;
- A description of any actions already taken and/or proposed by the principal/superintendent or his/her designee.

Copies of the written report, including the principal/superintendent’s findings, and the rationale and documentation of it will be forwarded to each of the parties involved within five (5) school days of completion of the investigation. All documentation of sexual harassment will be kept on file at the office of the superintendent.

If the principal/superintendent or his/her designee finds that sexually harassing conduct has occurred, then he/she may discipline the respondent, require the respondent to apologize to the complainant, suggest that the respondent go to counseling, or require the respondent to attend training, refer the matter for review by state or local law enforcement authorities, or any combination of the above.

Either party may appeal the decision of the principal in writing to the superintendent, within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the findings of the formal procedure.

The decision will be reviewed to ensure adequacy of the investigation and conclusions. Parties will be given an opportunity to submit additional information. The superintendent or his/her designee will make a decision and provide it in writing to both parties within thirty (30) days. The decision of the superintendent shall be final.

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

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

**Considerations to Remember:**

- A. A man/boy, as well as a woman/girl, may be the victim of sexual harassment, and a woman/girl, as well as a man/boy, may be the harasser.
- B. The victim may be the same or opposite sex as the harasser.
- C. The victim does not have to be the person at whom the unwelcome sexual conduct is directed. The victim may also be someone who is affected by such conduct when it is directed toward another person. For example, inappropriate attempts at humor or the sexual harassment of one girl (or boy) may create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for another girl (or boy) or may unreasonably interfere with an individual's educational performance.

**ELASTIC CLAUSE:** The school and administration reserve the right to establish fair and reasonable rules and regulations for circumstances that may arise requiring actions that are not covered in this handbook.

**LIBRARY**

The school library is an integral part of the school program. It supplies materials to support and augment the course of study and to encourage recreational reading. The Library also has a media center where computers are available for research. The usual loan period for books, magazines and pamphlets is two (2) weeks. Students are responsible for replacing lost books or materials.

**MEDICAL INFORMATION**

**INSURANCE:** The Wachusett Regional School District shall require each student participating in intramural programs and/or athletic teams to provide evidence of an active Accident Insurance Policy covering the student. (*WRSDC Policy 6616*)

**HEALTH SERVICES:** Students who become ill or injured will be directed to the school nurse for assessment, evaluation, treatment and/or referral. If the nurse is not available, students are to report to the office. Students are not to leave the building without authorization. Students are not allowed to call parents to complain of illness without speaking to school staff. Parents will be notified when a child must be sent home. If the parent cannot be contacted, the person indicated on the Emergency Card will be called. It is imperative that the Emergency Card be completed annually and updated as necessary.

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

**MANDATED SCREENING:** Students in grades K, 1, 4, 6-8, and 9 are weighed and measured and students in grades K (at the time of Kindergarten registration)-5, 7 and 10 are tested for vision and hearing. Students in grades 5-8 and 9 receive an annual postural screening for scoliosis. The screening is done by the school nurse with assistance from the Physical Education Staff. Parents will be notified if screening procedures identify possible problems.

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

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

**MEDICATIONS:** Medication, prescription and non-prescription, must be by written order of the provider with written permission from the parent/guardian before medication may be administered by the nurse. Medication must be brought to the school by the parent/guardian or other designated responsible adult in the original container with the label intact. Students are not to transport medication to and from school. However, in the case of self-medicating students, students may transport and self-administer upon completion of a written agreement between the parent and the nurse.

**PARENT/SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONS**

**PTO**

The P.T.O. is comprised of parents who have children attending Paxton Center School, members of the teaching staff and the building administration. Representatives of P.T.O. meet monthly to initiate and organize home and school activities. Parent orientation programs, teacher grants, coffee hours, open houses, and a number of student-centered events are sponsored each

year. P.T.O. also gives parents the opportunity to become directly involved in matters that affect their children. The PTO sponsors fundraisers each year to help fund field trips and educational programs.

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION COUNCIL (S.I.M.C.O.)** is set up to establish a process of interaction between the community, teachers, and administration which will enable Paxton Center School to become an environment cognizant of change and the need for continuing improvement. S.I.M.C.O. meets regularly.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (S.E.P.A.C.)** is a District wide council that meets throughout the year to “work towards the understanding of, respect for, support and appropriate education for all children with special needs in the WRSD communities.” We encourage all interested parents to join the S.E.P.A.C. For more information, see go to [www.wrsd.net](http://www.wrsd.net) and click the link for parent information.

#### **PICTURES by Life Touch**

School pictures will be taken early in October or November and should be available prior to the Holiday recess/vacation. Payment must be made at the time the pictures are taken. Refunds or retakes will be available upon request. Additional photo opportunities may be provided in the Spring.

#### **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

The Wachusett Regional School District recognizes that on occasion physical restraint is required to protect the safety of school community members from serious, imminent physical harm. Physical restraint is defined as the use of bodily force to limit a student’s freedom of movement. Physical restraint shall only be used in emergency situations, in the judgment of the school staff member, when other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution.

#### **A. TRAINING:**

To ensure the proper use of restraint and to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of restraint:

- All Staff will receive training regarding the District’s restraint policy and will be reviewed annually and employees hired after the school year begins will receive training within one month of starting their employment, which will include the following:

- The District’s restraint policy;
- Interventions, which may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors;
- Types of restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when an extended restraint is used;
  - Administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student; and
  - Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training in the use of physical restraint.
  - Designated staff members shall participate in at least sixteen hours of in depth training in the use of physical restraint.

Those designated staff members will then be authorized to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.

#### **B. ADMINISTRATION OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT:**

- Physical restraint may only be used in the following circumstances:
- When non-physical interventions would be ineffective;

and

- The student’s behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious harm to self and/or others.
- Physical restraint is prohibited in the following circumstances:
  - As a means of punishment; or
  - As a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student’s refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive or verbal threats that do

not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm. However, in the judgment of the staff member, if the property destruction or the refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive might escalate into, or could itself lead to serious, imminent harm to the student or to others, physical restraint is appropriate.

- Only school personnel who have received required training pursuant to this policy shall administer physical restraint on students with, wherever possible, one adult witness who does not participate in the restraint.
- The training requirements shall not preclude a teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.
- Physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or others from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.
- A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation, subject to

the safety requirements set forth in this policy. Floor or prone restraints may only be administered by a staff member who has received in-depth training as specified in this policy and, when in the judgment of the trained staff member, such method is required to provide safety for the student or others.

- Physical restraint shall be discontinued, as soon as possible, when it is determined that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent physical harm to self or others. (If, due to unusual circumstances, a restraint continues for more than twenty minutes, it shall be considered an “extended restraint” for purposes of the reporting requirements.)

- Additional safety requirements:

- A restrained student shall not be prevented from breathing or speaking. A staff member will continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color and respiration, during the restraint.

- If at any time during the physical restraint the student demonstrates significant physical distress, as determined by the staff member, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.

- Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.

- At an appropriate time after release of a student from physical restraint, a school administrator or other appropriate school staff shall:

- Review the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint;

- Review the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed; and

- Consider whether any follow up is appropriate for students and staff members who witnessed the incident.

### C. REPORTING

Staff shall report the use of physical restraint to the school principal after administration of a physical restraint that results in injury to a student or staff member; or lasts longer than five minutes. The following reporting procedure will be followed:

- The staff member shall verbally inform the principal of the restraint as soon as possible and shall provide a written report no later than the next school working day.

- The written report shall be provided to the principal or designee. The principal shall prepare the report if the principal administered the restraint.

- The principal or designee shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the Department of Education, upon request.

- The principal shall send a copy of the report to the Superintendent at the Central Office.

- The principal or his/her designee shall verbally inform the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) of such restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three school days following the use of such restraint. If the school customarily provides school related information to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided in that language. The written report shall include:

- Names and job titles of the staff who administered the restraint and observers, if any; the date of the restraint; the time the restraint began and ended; and the name of the administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint.

- A description of the activity in which the restrained student and other students and staff in the same room or vicinity were engaged immediately preceding the use of physical restraint; the behavior that prompted the restraint; the efforts made to de-escalate the situation; alternatives to restraint that were attempted; and the justification for initiating physical restraint.

- A description of the administration of the restraint including the holds used and reasons such holds were necessary; the student’s behavior and reactions during the restraint; how the restraint ended; and documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided.

- For extended restraints, the written report shall describe the alternatives to extended restraint that were attempted, the outcome of those efforts and the justification for administering the extended restraint.

- Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student. •Information regarding opportunities for the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss with school officials, the administration of the restraint, any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student and/or any other related matter.

- When a restraint has resulted in a serious injury to a student or program staff member or when an extended restraint has been administered, the program shall provide a copy of the written report to the Department of Education within five (5) school days of the administration of the restraint. The program shall also provide the Department with a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the program administrator for the thirty-day (30) period prior to the date of the reported restraint.

### D. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may voluntarily waive the reporting requirements as stated above for restraints that do not result in serious injury to the student or to a staff member and do not constitute extended restraint.

- The Wachusett Regional School District may seek such individual waiver for students who present a high risk of frequent, dangerous behavior that may require the frequent use of restraint.

- The Wachusett Regional School District shall not require parental consent to such a waiver as a condition of admission or provision of services.
  - Parent(s) guardian(s) may withdraw consent to such waiver at any time without penalty.
  - Extended restraints and restraint that result in serious injury to a student or staff member must be reported as described above, regardless of any individual waiver.
  - The following documentation regarding individual waiver of reporting requirements will be maintained on-site in the student’s file and will be made available for inspection to the Department of Education upon request:
    - Informed written consent of parent(s)/guardian(s) to the waiver, which shall specify those reporting requirements listed above that the parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to waive; and
    - Specific information regarding when and how the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed regarding the administration of all restraints to the individual student.
  - Nothing herein shall be construed to allow a program or classroom to receive an exemption or waiver from any of the requirements of this policy on behalf of all of the students enrolled in a particular program or classroom.

**E. RECEIVING/INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS**

Any student, or parent(s)/guardian(s) on said student’s behalf, who believes he or she has been inappropriately restrained by an employee of the Wachusett Regional School District, should follow the procedure in P8151 Policy Relating to Communication/Public Relations *Complaints About District Personnel*.

**RECESS**

We consider recess to be an integral part of the school day. All students have the opportunity to participate during outdoor recess unless they have a note from their physician recommending they remain indoors. Recess will be held indoors in the event of inclement weather or unsafe outside conditions. A wind chill of 20 degrees or above allows students to go outdoors. Be sure your child dresses appropriately for outdoor recess all through the year. Behavioral expectations are reinforced during recess. Supervising staff have the right to modify activities to ensure the safety of all students.

**RECORDING MEETINGS**

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

Requests by a parent/guardian or student for authorization to audio, video and/or stenographic record a meeting or conference shall be Requests by a parent/guardian or submitted in writing to the Superintendent of the Wachusett Regional School District no less than three (3) business days prior to said meeting/conference. The Superintendent’s decision on any such request shall be final. (*WRSDC Policy 3813*)

**SCHOOL CANCELLATION**

Un-scheduled School cancellation, delay, or dismissal announcements will be aired starting at approximately 6:00 a.m. on the following radio stations when school will be delayed or canceled for the entire day, due to inclement weather. **WTAG-580 AM, WSRS-96.1 FM, WXLO-104.5 FM and TV stations 4, 5 & 7.** Students or their parents should continue to listen to these stations for further announcements indicating a change from delay to no school should weather conditions change. Delays could be up to two (2) hours. Delayed openings do not affect dismissal times. In an emergency such as severe weather or a boiler breakdown, school may be dismissed earlier than the regular closing time. Parents need to inform their children as to what they should do in case of an early dismissal. An emergency dismissal form must be completed and returned to school.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE PUBLICATIONS:**

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

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

**SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Students are responsible for the proper care of all books, materials and furniture supplied by the school. Students who

damage school property, equipment or books will be required to pay for the damage done or replace the item and be subject to disciplinary action.

**LOCKERS:** A locker is the property of the Wachusett Regional School District which is issued to each middle school student. Lockers may be searched at any time for reasonable cause. Students may not take anything from another person's locker. This will result in disciplinary action. A student may attach a lock to his/her locker after completing a Lock Registration Form.

**TEXTBOOKS:** All textbooks issued to students must be covered. If a student does not return his/her textbook or if he/she returns it in unacceptable condition, he/she will be required to make restitution.

#### **STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:**

(Policy #6515) The Wachusett Regional School Committee recognizes and supports student publications and other literary activities that give students an experience in journalism.

The School Committee recognizes that the District must maintain a level of objectivity deemed to be in the best interest of the community and, to this end, the following procedures are in effect:

1. No school publication will accept advocacy or political advertising that is political, religious, or discriminatory in nature.
2. All advertising is subject to review and approval by the principal or a designee relative to content and appropriateness.
3. Final editorial control and approval of all materials intended for publication are the responsibility of, and may be subject to the approval of school administration.
4. This policy shall be referenced in the "Student Handbook."
5. A statement indicating the editorial control by the school administration regarding all advertising will be included on order forms or other similar correspondence.

#### **TECHNOLOGY**

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

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

- Access and use of the District's Internet is a privilege,

not a right, and access to it may be denied to students violating this policy.

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

- District shall limit student use of e-mail to District supervised programs.

1. Student work may be displayed on the school site web pages or the District web page with the student's first name only when prior written permission is received from the parent/guardian annually.
2. Photographs of students may be displayed on the school site web pages or District web page only identified by classroom teacher or grade when prior permission is received from the parent/guardian annually.

**ACCEPTABLE COMPUTER USE:** The purpose of the WRSD network and the Internet is to enhance the educational process. Use of this media is limited to educational purposes determined by the District. Access to the Internet enables students to explore thousands of libraries, databases and bulletin boards while exchanging messages the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate and or potentially offensive to some people. While the District's intent is to make Internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. It is the District's position that the benefits to students in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed the potential disadvantages.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT USE OF TECHNOLOGY:**

1. Students may not install any software on any computers or attempt to make copies of software that is on the hard drive.
2. Students should respect others' rights to privacy and not access or use information on a computer without permission of the owner of the information.
3. Students should respect others' property. Students should not vandalize computers, computer systems and computer software. Vandalism, including malicious viruses will result in loss of privileges and possible legal action. Students are prohibited from making changes to or deleting computer programs, files, or information that belongs to others.
4. Use computers, software and related technologies for purposes that are within the law; that are beneficial to others, that are not harmful (physically, financially, or otherwise) to others or others' property.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT USE OF INTERNET:**

1. As to any interaction with strangers, use common sense and exercise caution. Do not reveal your own personal information such as addresses, telephone numbers, user names, passwords, etc. or that of other students.
2. Accept personal responsibility for appropriate use of system. Abuses, i.e. pornography, illegal solicitation, racism, sexism, inappropriate language, are prohibited

and must be reported to your teacher.

3. Use is limited to activities which support education and research. Copyrighted materials plagiarizing works, threatening or obscene materials or trade secrets may not be transmitted. Violation of this provision could result in prosecution.

4. All student use of E-mail shall only be allowed under the direct supervision of a teacher.

5. Students are not allowed to create or maintain personal or other unauthorized web pages.

6. Access to the network is a privilege not a right and as such may be denied to any student who is found violating school regulations

7. On-line etiquette proceeds from every day acceptable conduct and includes: being polite, using appropriate language, maintaining all users' privacy, appropriate use of Email (no support of illegal or illicit activities,) being considerate and not disrupting the network by game playing or large scale downloading.

8. Network files are not private and remain open to administrators to maintain system integrity, insure appropriate use and to maintain hard drive storage. Additional storage beyond what is pre-assigned may be requested through the building media specialist.

9. Users of the system do so at their own risk. Damages, including loss of data or information inaccuracies are not the responsibility of the Wachusett Regional School District.

10. Security remains a high priority. Teachers and other staff members will make every attempt to monitor and guide students toward appropriate use of the system. All users are responsible for system security and must report problems to their teachers.

*See WRSD Policy 6531 Relating to STUDENT INTERNET ACCESS on P.18 of this handbook.*

### TELEPHONE

Messages and deliveries from home should be left in the school office. Students will be called out of class only in an emergency to minimize class disruptions. Students are allowed to use the office phone with permission from teachers and office staff during non-class times. Personal cell phones are not to be used during the school day for any reason.

### TRANSPORTATION

It shall be expected that students will go to and from school by the same means on a daily basis. A parent may choose an alternate mode of transportation over which the school system has no authority. Therefore, a choice to use an alternative mode of transportation other than the school bus shall be at the risk of the parent and the student. (See WRSD Alternate Transportation Policy #6562) It is the intent of the WRSD school committee to comply with state law and bus students who live two (2) or more miles from the school they attend. Students may be required to walk up to one (1) mile to a bus stop and up to but not including two (2) miles to his/her school.

Exceptions to the above rule for such reasons as safety, special needs and physical handicaps may be made by vote of the committee. Students are not allowed to ride busses other than their own.

Students that walk to school are not permitted on school busses.

**DROP OFF AND PICKUP:** Parents may drop students off anytime after 8:10. Please follow the traffic pattern and pull up as far as possible to drop of your child safely and quickly. Please remember that you are to **NEVER** pass busses when they are lined up and they have their lights on and stop signs out. Violators will be reported.

**BICYCLE RIDERS:** Bicycle riders are to walk their bicycles across main thoroughfares where school crossing guards are located. Students should ride bikes on sidewalk only. **All students are to wear bicycle helmets when riding their bikes.** The privilege of riding bicycles to school may be taken away at any time if the student does not follow safety procedures or is endangering other students.

**WALKERS:** Students walking to and from school should cross with crossing guards and use sidewalks only.

**SKATEBOARDS/ROLLER BLADES:** Skateboards, roller blades, sneakers with wheels, scooters and any similar items may not be brought to school or used on school property. Any of these items will be confiscated.

**BUS DISCIPLINE REGULATIONS/ SAFETY & SECURITY:** The Wachusett Regional School District and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing District requirements of student conduct on busses will rest with the principal.

To ensure safety of all students who ride in busses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school busses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders or damages properties will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges. Notification of this policy shall be contained in the Student Handbook.

1. Children will be instructed as to the proper procedure for boarding and exiting from a school bus and in proper and safe conduct while aboard.

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

emergency situations.

3. All vehicles used to transport children will be inspected periodically for conformance with state and federal safety requirements.
4. Classroom instruction on school bus safety will be provided.

#### **USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES**

The WRSD Committee has agreed to make Paxton Center available for educational, recreational and civic purposes to recognized, responsible organizations within the town. The practical requirements for use of school facilities are: Programs cannot interfere with regular school activities, and activities cannot damage or cause excessive depreciation of school property. Please contact the office to make plans for school use. WRSD School Use Application/Agreement must be completed and approved by the building principal.

#### **VISITORS**

All visitors must enter through the main entrance, check in at office, sign in, and wear a visitor's badge.

**If you need this booklet translated, please contact the main office of your child's school.**

**Portuguese/Português**

Se você necessitar este livreto traduzido, contate por favor o escritório principal da escola da sua criança.

**Spanish/ Español**

Si usted necesita este librete traducido, entre en contacto con por favor la oficina Principal de la escuela de su niño.

**French/ Français**

Si vous avez besoin de ce livret traduit, entrez en contact avec svp le bureau Principal de l'école de votre enfant.

**German/ Deutsch**

Wenn Sie diese übersetzte Broschüre benötigen, treten Sie bitte mit dem upbüro der Schule Ihres Kindes in Verbindung.

**Russian/Русско**

Если вы этот переведенный буклет, то пожалуйста контактируйте главный офис школы вашего ребенка.

**Korean/한국어**

너가 번역되는 이 소책자를 필요로 하면, 너의 아이 학교의 본사를 접촉하십시오.

**Chinese/汉语**

如果您需要这本小册子被翻译，请与您的儿童的学校大会办公处联系。

**Japanese/日本語**

翻訳されるこの小冊子を必要とすれば あなたの子供の学校の主要なオフィスに連絡しなさい。

**Hindi/हिन्दी**

Agar Aapko yah puistka ki Anavaaidt AavaSyakta hO tba kRpyaa Apnao baccao ko ivaValaya ka mau#ya kayaa-laya sampk- kiryao .

**Polish/Polski**

Jeśli potrzebujesz tej broszury przetłumaczone, skontaktuj się z głównego urzędu Twoje dziecko w szkole.

**Greek**

Αν χρειάζεστε το φυλλάδιο αυτό μεταφράστηκε, παρακαλούμε επικοινωνήστε με την κύρια έδρα του σχολείου του παιδιού σας.

**Italian/Italia**

Se hai bisogno di questo opuscolo tradotto, si prega di contattare l'ufficio principale del vostro bambino scuola.

**Arabic** المكتب رئيسية من طفلك مدرسة. اتصل ب إن أنت تحتاج هذا كراس يترجم, رجا

