

**Thomas Prince School
Student Handbook**

2008-2009

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Thomas Prince School Mission Statement

Our mission is to be a community of learners in which individuals reach their maximum potential intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically.

Goals for all members of this community are:

- **To share enthusiasm and a sense of responsibility for lifelong learning by committing to gain the skills necessary to direct one's own destiny.**
- **To work together with a spirit of cooperation by recognizing, respecting, and supporting individual rights and differences as well as cultivating social competence and citizenship.**
- **To help each learner achieve maximum potential by providing an environment that is conducive to learning.**
- **To develop effective communication skills.**
- **To contribute to each individual's emotional and physical well being.**
- **To monitor the needs of the school and seek continuous improvement in all areas by drawing upon community resources.**

Fast Facts

School Phone Numbers

School Office	978 464-2110
Fax	978 464-2112
Nurse's Office	978 464-5507
District Offices	508 829-1670

Web Site www.wrsd.net

Address 170 Sterling Road – Princeton, MA 01541

School Hours

School Office	7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Grades K – 8 (full day)	
Arrival	8:20 a.m.
School Hours	8:25 a.m. – 2:55 p.m.
Dismissal	2:55 p.m.
Kindergarten (half day)	
Morning Session	8:25 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.

Absences

Parents/Guardians are asked to call 978- 464-5507 before 8:25 a.m. if their child will be absent.

Tardy

Parents/Guardians are asked to call 978 -464-5507 and indicate that your child will be late, not absent.

Dismissals

Early dismissal of students can be arranged through the office. Please have your child bring a note stating: (1) the reason for dismissal, (2) the time he/she is to be dismissed, and (3) who will pick the child up. (see page 9 for more detail)

No School or Delayed Opening Announcements

No school and delayed opening announcements will be aired beginning at approximately 6:15 a.m. on the following stations:

WBZ-AM 1030	WSRS-FM 96.1	WBZ-TV Ch 4
WTAG-AM 580	WRKO-AM 680	WCVB-TV Ch 5
WEIM-AM 1280	WXLO-FM 104.5	WHDH-TV Ch 7

The delayed opening procedure could be used as an alternative to canceling school. Under delayed opening, the school could be opened up to TWO HOURS later than usual. (No a.m. kindergarten). School would close at the usual time on delayed opening days. Should the emergency situation not improve another announcement will be made by 8:15 a.m. canceling school for the day.

Behavioral Expectations

Code of Conduct The school attempts to take a positive approach to the issue of conduct of students. The success of any school depends upon developing a mutual respect for each other. We will attempt to administer penalties, when necessary, with compassion, clarity and firmness, while trying to foster self-discipline and responsibility. Students are expected to be courteous and respect the rights of all individuals. The school has the authority to discipline students for inappropriate behavior off campus at school-related functions or any type of activity reasonably related to school activities.

Due Process- TPS student 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. Under school rules, all students at TPS 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 of suspension); an explanation of the evidence; and 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 charges mailed to student's parent/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 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 – Students are also provided with an avenue of appeal in cases where you feel policies were not justly applied. A student charged by a teacher with an offense may appeal the decision to an administrator. The final appeal is the principal except as specified above.

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

Detention An after school detention may be issued by any teacher as a form of punishment. If a detention is warranted, the teacher issuing the detention will contact the parents/guardians of the child to make them aware of the problem, elicit their support and to arrange for an appropriate date, time and method of transportation home from school.

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

Suspensions In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to suspend students from attending school. These instances involve serious disruptions of the school community, or when other forms of discipline do not appear to be effective. For the duration of an out of school suspension, students may not visit the school or attend any school-related events. At the conclusion of an out of school suspension, a student's parent/guardian must have a discussion with the administrator and reach agreement on conditions for the student's readmission to the school community. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to use an in house suspension for students. A parent/guardian will be notified in either case.

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

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

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

The following general school rules governing student conduct are enforced by all staff, in all areas of the school building and grounds:

- (1) Conduct which endangers persons or property or is seriously disruptive to the educational process. Included within such prohibited conduct are the following acts:
- (2) Open defiance of the authority of any administrator, teacher or persons having authority over the student, including verbal abuse.
- (3) Repeated unauthorized absence from school.
- (4) Intentional and /or successful incitement of truancy by other students.
- (5) Fighting.
- (6) Using or possessing tobacco, matches, lighters, selling tobacco, alcohol or any controlled substances.
- (7) Knowingly using or copying the academic work of others and presenting it as their own without proper attribution.
- (8) Falsification of school records.
- (9) Verbal abuse and/or harassment of other individuals.
- (10) Other misconduct determined by the school committee.

Student conduct in the classroom is enforced by each teacher, who, through his/her own means and methods conforms to the policies established for the school. The teachers are the authority within the classroom and throughout the school and exercise the authority to create an effective atmosphere for learning.

Special Education Discipline All students are expected to meet standards of behavior as set by the Wachusett community. Chapter 71B of the MGL and IDEA 1997, require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation team to have special needs and whose program is described in an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of special needs students:

- 1) The IEP for every special needs student will indicate if they can meet student management policies or if modifications are needed.
- 2) The principal (or designee) will notify the Special Education Office of any special needs student who has 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 (10) days in a school year:
 - a. Services will be provided in order to ensure that student receives FAPE.
 - b. A functional behavioral assessment will be conducted and a behavioral intervention plan will be implemented.

- 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.**

School – Home Communications

Use of School Telephone If deemed a matter of importance by the teacher or other staff member, students will be permitted to use the telephone. Students will not be allowed to use the phone to make arrangements for after school activities. All personal long distance calls must be made collect or charged to the student's home phone. Except in an emergency, students will not be called to the phone. Any messages to students will be delivered by office staff.

Cell Phones, iPods & Other Electronics Students are strongly encouraged not to bring iPods, CD players, stereos, video games, cameras, 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 reasons. Personal items such as these if brought to school are the sole responsibility of the student. Any cell phones brought to school by students are to be kept OFF and in the students' book bags/lockers 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. Cell phones may only be used before or after school hours. Any cell phone found to be visible or in use during the school day will be confiscated. Any cell phones taken during the school day will be brought to the school office for safe keeping. A warning will be given to first time offenders. Subsequent offenses will result in a detention and the device will only be released to a parent/guardian. If these items are lost, damaged or stolen, the sole responsibility for addressing these circumstances belongs to the students and parent/guardian.

Care of School Property Students are expected to cover all textbooks and keep them covered during the school year. A parent/guardian of a student will be required to cover the cost of any item (book, equipment, supplies, etc.) furnished to the student by the school which will need to be replaced due to its loss or damage. This requirement shall also apply to any school property vandalized by a student.

TPS Newsletter The school publishes a monthly newsletter to help parents/guardians keep up to date on events that are occurring in the school, student achievements and PTA activities. The newsletter is sent home with the students.

Monthly Menu Calendar At the beginning of each month, a calendar listing the lunch choices for the month is sent home with students. On the back of the calendar is a listing of events and meetings scheduled for the month. This is also posted on the TPS web page.

Curriculum Nights All classroom teachers give a presentation of the curriculum objectives, their homework policy, classroom expectations, and other important information. Parents/guardians have the opportunity to attend a presentation, visit the classroom, see the textbooks and resources and ask questions about the school year.

Parent – Teacher Conferences Parent – teacher conferences are important to the well being of students. A parent/guardian may arrange for a conference at any time during the school year. You should contact the teacher to arrange for a mutually convenient time.

Parents/Guardians and teachers are encouraged to communicate with each other at any time they may have questions concerning a student. Parents should not visit the classroom during the school day to discuss their child's progress. Please arrange an appointment with the teacher(s).

Report Cards Report cards will be issued three times during the school year for K-2 and four times for grades 3-8. Interim progress reports will also be issued for grades 5-8. These reports must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to school.

Before or After School Help Students wishing to come in before school or remain after school for additional help must make arrangements with the teacher(s) at least one day in advance. The parent/guardian must provide the school with written permission for the student to stay and assumes the responsibility for providing the student with transportation.

Student Classroom/ Homeroom Placement The decision regarding a student's classroom/homeroom placement is made by the sending grade level teaching team. Should parents/guardians wish to make a specific request, they must submit it in writing to the principal no later than May 1st with their reason for the request. The principal will bring it to the attention of the sending team and they will consider it in their decision making process. A request will be given every consideration, but there is no guarantee that it will be honored. Requests received after the class lists have been established may not be considered.

Student Transfer Please inform the principal's office if you are moving and advise the school of the last day your child will attend. The school will also need your new address and the name and address of the new school your child will be attending. A transfer form might be required for the new school. Student records will be sent to the new school upon their request and will not be given to parents for transit.

Other Information

Homework Homework fulfills both academic and non-academic purposes and is intended to provide an opportunity for integrating home and school experience by:

- (1) Reinforcing and supplementing work done in school.
- (2) Enriching the totality of the student's school experience.
- (3) Improving research skills and student awareness of community learning resources (e.g. libraries, museums, townspeople, etc.).
- (4) Providing opportunities to use knowledge and skills learned in school in creative ways outside of school.
- (5) Promoting individual responsibility, initiative and motivation.
- (6) Teaching the student how to recognize and establish priorities, budget time accordingly and organize one's materials.
- (7) Create opportunities for independent study.
- (8) Develop diverse interests that might enhance later experiences in life.

Students should be encouraged to continue their school learning at home and in the community so as to develop the ability and desire to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Recess We consider recess to be an integral part of the school day. All students will participate unless restricted due to disciplinary action. If it is determined by the principal or teacher(s) that the weather is inclement, recess will be held indoors. Students are not allowed into the gym, computer lab or hallways during outdoor recess unless given permission by the administration.

Field Trips Generally, and in accordance with school committee policy, each classroom/grade participates in at least one field trip during the school year. These trips are planned in conjunction with an area of study and are usually bus trips. The costs associated with the trip must be the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Should this pose an economic hardship, the parent/guardian is urged to discuss the matter with the principal and/or the student's teacher(s). Permission slips are sent home and must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian for the student to be able to participate.

Appearance and Dress All students (K-8) are expected to dress in a manner which is not disruptive to the educational process of the school. Students are not allowed to wear clothing that expose the belly, buttocks, bra straps, breasts, under garments, halter tops, short shorts, sleep wear or slippers, or garments that promote illegal substances (drugs or alcohol). The administration has the authority to make this determination. Students wearing inappropriate clothing to school will remain in the office until a parent/guardian brings an appropriate outfit. Specific clothing may be required for certain school activities (e.g. physical education, etc.). It is strongly recommended that all outerwear (e.g. coats, hats, sweaters, mittens, etc.) be marked with a student's name. Students are also expected to observe a standard of cleanliness and of personal hygiene, which ensures their health and safety, as well as the health and safety of others.

Lost and Found Most found articles (clothing, lunch boxes, etc.) are displayed on a table outside of the administration office. Valuables (watches, money, etc.) are kept in the administration office. Any items not claimed will be donated to local charities.

Bicycles and Skateboards Students are allowed to ride their bicycles to school. They must lock their bicycles on the bike rack as soon as they arrive on school property. Students are not permitted to ride their bicycles in the parking lot or on the playground. Any person twelve years of age or younger operating a bicycle or being carried as a passenger on a bicycle on a public way, bike path or on any other public right-of-way must wear an approved helmet.

Students are not allowed to bring skateboards to school or to skateboard on school property. Police will be notified.

School Absences and Tardiness and Dismissals

Absences Parents/Guardians are asked to call 978-464-5507, before 8:25 a.m. if their child will be absent. There is an answering machine to record your child's reported absence at that number from 3:30 p.m. on the previous day until 8:25 a.m. on the day of the absence. Calls by students will not be accepted.

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

When absent, students are responsible for making up the work they have missed within a reasonable time frame as determined by the teacher(s) and for seeking extra help if they feel they need it. The school will provide assignments upon request.

The school has a right to request that students who are absent more than 10 days in a marking period bring a doctor's note for each subsequent absence.

Foreseen Absences Foreseen absences, e.g., family vacations during the school year, place a burden on the student, the teacher(s) and other students. For this reason, they should be planned to coincide with the regularly scheduled vacation times. It is our position that these types of absences should be avoided. We do recognize however, that there may be circumstances that make it necessary for you to take your child out of school. In these cases, parents/guardians must submit a note to the principal and a copy to the teacher(s) stating the date(s) of the absence and the reason.

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

Tardiness Students who arrive after 8:25 a.m. are considered tardy and must report to the school office before going to their classroom. If you know that your child will be tardy please call 978- 464-5507 and report that your child will be tardy not absent. All students must be in homeroom/classrooms by 8:25 a.m. Students are tardy to school after 8:25 a.m. It is important to the students and teachers to have all students present for homeroom. It is very distracting to all when students arrive late. Every effort should be made by the parents/guardians to get their children to school on time. Students who are tardy more than three times per term, receive a 30 minute detention for each tardy.

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

Students will be dismissed to the office from class. No student will be allowed to leave the building unless accompanied by the designated adult.

Students will not be allowed to go home with another child without a note from the parent and students are not able to change buses to go home with another child. Students without a note will return home in accordance with their regular routine.

Early Dismissal During the School Day Should an emergency develop during the school day, students could be sent home earlier than the 2:55 p.m. dismissal time. The decision will be announced by the area radio stations and a Connect Ed telephone call will be made. If possible, school lunch will be served prior to the dismissal. An emergency procedure is in place for students in grades K-5 whose parent/guardian has submitted to the school the Emergency Early Release Information form.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD INSTRUCT THEIR CHILDREN ON WHAT TO DO AND/OR WHERE TO GO IN THE EVENT OF AN EARLY DISMISSAL AND THERE IS NO ONE AT HOME.

School Health and Safety

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. Parents will be notified when a child must be sent home. If the parent cannot be contacted, the person indicated on the Emergency Information card will be called. It is imperative that the Emergency Card be completed annually and updated as necessary.

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

Emergency Information Cards The school maintains a file of emergency information cards should a parent need to be contacted during the school day. It is essential that this information be kept up to date. Please contact the school office (978-464-2110) in case of any changes.

Medication Policy

- (1) Medications should be given at home whenever possible.
- (2) Students in grades K through eight are not permitted to transport medication (prescription or over the counter) to and from school.
- (3) Medications must be given directly to the school nurse, by an adult, in the original prescription container.
- (4) The nurse must have written parent permission and a physician's order before prescription medication may be administered.
- (5) The nurse must have written parent permission before over the counter medication may be administered.

Contagious Conditions Parents are requested to report any incidence of a 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.

Allergies Related to Insect Bites If you know your child is allergic to insect bites and requires an EpiPen, you need to provide the medication along with the physician's order and parental consent to the health office.

Food Allergies There are some students with life threatening food allergies, specifically tree nut and peanut allergies. For this reason, we have areas throughout the school that are considered peanut/nut free areas. These areas include specific tables in the cafeteria as well as the Health Office and certain classrooms.

Mandated Screening Programs The Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires that public school students be screened for the following: height and weight measurements, postural abnormalities, vision, and hearing. The school will send out notices prior to screening students.

Exclusion from School Activities for Health Reasons Students are expected to participate in all school related activities. Temporary exclusion will be allowed upon written request from the parent/guardian. Permanent exclusion requires written notification from a physician.

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 and medical reasons.

School Evacuation Drills Evacuation drills are conducted as required by state regulations to ensure the safety of all persons in the event of an emergency. Students are instructed in, and must comply with, the procedures established for safe evacuation of and return to the school building. Examples of drills include, but are not limited to, fire and lockdown drills.

Food Services

Lunch Program For reasons of good nutrition, the school encourages every student to buy or bring a lunch to school every day. Lunch is provided throughout the school year and is paid for on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. The burden of remembering to bring lunch/milk money is on the parent/guardian and the student. The school, while willing to assist on occasion, discourages charges and will set limits on those who habitually forget their money.

Peanut, Nut Allergies Several students are allergic to peanuts and other nuts; therefore we have designated peanut/nut free tables in the cafeteria and certain locations of the building and playground. Please keep this in mind when packing your child's lunch and snacks.

Snack Program A daily snack period is provided for students on a cash only basis. Snack foods include such items as ice cream, yogurt, fresh fruit, chips, cookies, juices, milk, etc. Parents/guardians should monitor the amount of money their child has for snacks and also impress upon the child that this program is not a substitute for lunch.

Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program Applications for the free or reduced price lunch program are sent home with each student at the beginning of the school year. If at any time during the school year a parent/guardian feels that they may be eligible to participate in the program, applications may be obtained at the school office.

Transportation Safety

School Bus Rules Your child's safety is as important to us as it is to you. Therefore, to ensure the safest possible ride, the transportation company and the school ask that parents/guardians and students know that riding the bus to and from school is a privilege. Details of the bus discipline procedures and consequences are given to all students at the beginning of each school year.

Student Drop-Off by Parent/Guardian Supervision of students by staff does not begin until 8:15 a.m. Therefore, students must not be left off at school prior to that time. All students should be dropped off at the doorway leading to the school administration offices only.

Fire Lane Parents are prohibited from parking in the fire lane at all times. Parents must park their cars in an appropriate parking space when picking up students at dismissal.

Middle School Program Information

Middle School Honor Roll Program An honor roll program exists for students in grades 6-8. High honors for outstanding achievement is awarded to those students who receive an A- and above in every subject area together with satisfactory effort and conduct. Honors will be awarded to those students who receive a B- or above in every subject area together with satisfactory effort and conduct.

Interscholastic Sports Program Students must pass all subjects reported on the most recent formal communication with parent/guardian. Waivers may be granted upon the recommendation of the principal.

The student must demonstrate appropriate behavior according to school standards. At the sole discretion of the principal, a student may be declared ineligible for participation because of chronic misbehavior or an incident of serious or major misconduct according to school standards. Students scheduled to attend after school disciplinary sessions on the day of practice or a 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 a game are not allowed to participate in the athletic activity on that day.

In order to participate in a sport, a student must have a note from their physician stating that the student has had a physical examination in the past 13 months or 395 days and that they are not restricted in any way from participating in the program as required.

Parents/guardians must provide documentation that the student is adequately covered by an accident/health insurance plan.

Students who are absent from school for all or part of a day due to illness or a non-emergency situation on the day of a practice or game or any extra curricular event are not allowed to participate in the activity on that day or evening.

School Support Organizations / Information

School Volunteer Program The school volunteer program consists of parents/guardians and other community members who are interested in giving of their time and talent to students and teachers. If you have an interest in this program, please contact a teacher or the principal at the school.

Criminal Offender Records Information (CORI) Massachusetts General Law 71 s.38R, requires any person that may have direct contact with children pass a Criminal Offender Records (CORI) check. All school personnel have been CORI checked. Any parent, who wishes to volunteer in the school, chaperone field trips or dances, or work in the school, must pass a CORI check. Forms are

available in the school office. Once a parent has been approved, a badge will be issued and is valid for three years.

Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) The Thomas Prince School PTA is a community organization. It is open to all members of the community who are interested in the welfare of our most precious resource, our children. Their activities include:

- (1) children's educational growth and development projects
- (2) adult awareness and educational programs
- (3) home-school communications
- (4) fundraising to support school related activities
- (5) volunteer support
- (6) socialization
- (7) supplemental programs

School Improvement and Modernization Council (SIAM) SIAM is an advisory council to the principal and functions in compliance with the regulations established by the Massachusetts Department of Education relative to the Education Reform Act. SIAM members consist of parents, teachers and other interested Princeton citizens. In its advisory capacity, SIAM establishes subcommittees, which work with the principal and the staff to investigate ways in which the school program might be improved. If you have an interest in participating in this group, please contact the principal for more information.

Kindergarten Entrance Requirements A child must be five years of age by August 31 to enter the kindergarten program. Registration and a parent/guardian orientation are conducted in the spring preceding the child's entrance to the program. At the registration interview with the school nurse, the parent/guardian must bring a birth certificate, a record of immunization and completed registration forms. The school should be informed of any handicaps or other concerns at that time. Each child will undergo screenings for vision and hearing, gross and fine motor development, speech and language development and general concept development. All testing results will be reported to the parent/guardian.

Preschool Screening A parent/guardian may request screening for their preschool child (age 3+) if they suspect there is the possibility of a learning difficulty. Services can be obtained by contacting the Director of Pupil Services at 508-829-1670.

District, State and Federal Policies

Distribution of School Committee Publications The Wachusett Regional School district shall, in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws and Department of Education regulations, provide all publications as approved by the School Committee and required by the State Department of Education. The School Committee Policy Book shall be made available for review to any person, upon request to the Superintendent's Office. Copies of said publications shall be placed in each of the five Town Libraries and all school libraries. A nominal fee, not to exceed the cost of publication, shall be charged to any person requesting a copy of one of the publications. (Policy #1523)

Wachusett Regional School District Policy Prohibiting 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, and that 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. (P6631)

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), the 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
1745 Main Street
Jefferson, MA 01522
508- 829-1670 ext. 224

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
1745 Main Street
Jefferson, MA 01522
508-829-1670 ext. 237

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 Administrative Services (for all others) who shall respond in writing and meet with the aggrieved party in an attempt to resolve the alleged grievance within fifteen (15) days.
- Step #3** if a satisfactory solution is not achieved at step #2 within the fifteen (15) day period, the alleged grievance may be filed at the next step with the school committee. The school committee shall provide an opportunity for the alleged grievance to be heard at its next regularly scheduled meeting and a decision shall be rendered in writing to the aggrieved party within fifteen (15) days.

Statement An aggrieved party, if not satisfied with the decision of the school committee, may refer the case to the Massachusetts State Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148 (781-338-3300) and to the Office of Civil Rights, Region 1, U.S. Department of Education, John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House, Room 701, Boston, MA 02109 (617-233-9662). 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.

Safety and Security Procedures The Wachusett School district and its staff share with the students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing District requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the principal. To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders or damages properties will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges. (P6621)

- 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.

Alternate Student Transportation It shall be expected that students will go to and from school by the same means of transportation on a daily basis. A parent or high school student may choose an alternate mode of transportation over which the school system has no authority. Therefore, a choice to use an alternative form of transportation other than the school bus shall be at the risk of the parent and the student. K-8 students will be required to present written permission notice to the school from the parent/guardian when using alternate means of transportation. In cases of emergencies, oral notification via the telephone will be acceptable. (P6562)

Enrichment The WRSD 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. WRSD shall:

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

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

- 1) Student rights and responsibilities
- 2) Student behavior and discipline
- 3) Glossary of terms

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

Liability for Damages The WRSD 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/guardian, 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 The WRSD 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 student 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.

Physical Restraint The WRSD 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.

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:

- 1) The District's restraint policy
- 2) Interventions, which may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors
- 3) Types of restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the risk of injury to a student when an extended restraint is used.

- 4) **Administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student.**
- 5) **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 (16) 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.

Administration of Physical Restraint Physical restraint may only be used in the following circumstances:

- 1) **When non-physical interventions would be ineffective**
- 2) **When the student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious harm to self and/or others**

Physical restraint is prohibited in the following circumstances:

- 1) **As a means of punishment**
- 2) **As a response to property destruction**
- 3) **Disruption of school order**
- 4) **A student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive**
- 5) **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 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, serious, physical harm to self or others. 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:

- 1) **Review the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint.**

- 2) Review the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed
- 3) Consider whether any follow-up is appropriate for students and staff members who witnessed the incident.

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 (5) minutes. The following reporting procedures will be followed:

- 1) The staff member shall verbally inform the principal of the restraint as soon as possible.
- 2) The staff member shall provide a written report no later than the next school working day. The written report will be provided to the principal or designee. The principal shall prepare the report if the principal administered the restraint.
- 3) 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 of Schools.
- 4) The principal or his/her designee shall verbally inform the student's parents/guardians of such restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three days following the use of such restraint. If the school customarily provides school related information to the parent/guardian in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided in that language.
- 5) 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 in immediately preceding the use of the 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 students 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/guardian to discuss with school officials the administration of restraint, any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student and/or any other related matter.
- 6) 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 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 administrator for the thirty days prior to the date of the reported restraint.

Special Circumstances Parents/guardians may voluntarily waive the reporting requirements as stated above for restraints that do not result in a serious injury to the student or to a staff member and do not constitute extended restraint. The WRSD may seek such individual waiver for students who present a high risk of frequent, dangerous behavior that may require frequent use of restraint. The WRSD shall not require parental consent to such a waiver as a condition of admission or provision of services. Parents/guardians may withdraw consent to such waiver at any time without penalty. Extended restraints and restraints that result in serious injury to a student or staff member must be reported as described above, regardless of any 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/guardian to the waiver, which shall specify those reporting requirements listed above that the parent/guardian agrees to waive; and specific information regarding when and how the parent/guardian 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 students enrolled in a particular program or classroom.

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 WRSD, should follow the procedures in P8151 Policy Relating to Communication/Public Relations Complaints about District Personnel.

Substance Abuse Policy The WRSD 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 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.

Weapons Policy The WRSD shall prohibit possession and/or use of any kind of weapon; weapons will not be tolerated on school premises or at school-related or school-sponsored activities and events. For the purpose of this policy, "weapon" includes, but is not limited to, firearms, knives, or any other devices, or objects used to inflict or to threaten bodily harm.

1. Any weapons 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 school-sponsored events may be subject to expulsion from the school by the principal.
2. Violations of this policy may lead to expulsion under the provisions of MGL Ch. 71 Sec. 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 MGL Ch. 269, Sec. 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.

Sexual Harassment It is the policy of the WRSD 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, Ch.151C. It will be a violation of this policy for any student to be sexually harassed by or to sexually harass another student, any employee or volunteer or other person connected with the District through conduct or communication of a sexual nature or for assisting in an investigation of sexual harassment is in violation of this policy.

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).**
- (3) or such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's educational performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.**

Sexual harassment may include the following types of activities, but it is not limited to these; touching, verbal comments, name calling, starting or repeating sexual rumors, leers or stares, sexual or dirty jokes, cartoons, pictures or pornography, using the computer to leave sexual messages or graffiti or to play sexually offensive computer games, gestures, pressure for sexual activity, cornering, blocking, following or standing too close to a person, conversations that are too personal, rating an individual, obscene t-shirts, hats or pins, showing inappropriate videos or other materials during class, sexual assault or attempted sexual assault, massaging the neck or shoulders, touching oneself sexually in front of others, graffiti, making kissing or smacking sounds, howling, catcalls, whistles, repeatedly asking someone out when he/she is not interested, pulling down someone's pants or forcibly removing articles of clothing, facial expressions and slam books.

Complaint Procedure If you feel that someone has sexually harassed or is 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. 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 the 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 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 understands the issues(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.**

If the principal/superintendent feels that the complaint can be resolved without 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 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 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 a resolution has not been achieved, the following formal procedure will be used.

Formal Procedure

- (1) The formal procedure is used when any one of the following occurs:
 - a) You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent asks 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 five school days that the formal procedure be used.****
- (2) The formal procedure will be completed within twenty school days of the complaint being filed with the principal/superintendent, or if the informal procedure was used, within twenty 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 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 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 school days of receipt of the findings of the formal procedure. The decision will be reviewed to ensure accuracy 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 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 (MAD), 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. McCormick 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 subject to retaliation, he/she should file a complaint with the principal/superintendent.

Considerations to Remember

- (1) 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.
- (2) The victim may be the same or opposite sex as the harasser.
- (3) The victim does not have to be the person at whom the unwanted sexual contact 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 (boy) may create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for another girl (boy) or may unreasonably interfere with an individual's educational performance.

Student Records (P6910) In accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Education Student Record Regulations, WRSD shall:

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

- (4) Disseminate, to parents and student, 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 or she may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record into the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript includes only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. This information includes name, address, course titles, grades, credits and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school system for at least sixty years after the student leaves the system. The District also maintains a "Temporary Record", which contains all information not contained in the official transcript. Such information may include standardized test results, class rank, extracurricular activities and evaluations by teachers, counselors and other school staff. 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 student or parent 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 parent/student for said copies at the District rate.

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

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 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 Record 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 information before its destruction. (P6910)

Consistent with the Education Reform Act, the District will not transfer a student's record to a new school outside of the District without prior consent required from the parent or eligible student. Authorized school personnel, to include:

- (a) school administrators, teachers, counselors and other professionals who are employed by the school committee or who are providing services to the student under an agreement between the school committee and a

- service provider, and who are working directly with the student in an administrative, teaching, counseling, and/or diagnostic capacity
- (b) administrative office staff and clerical personnel, employed by the school committee service contract, and those whose duties require them to have access to student records for purposes of processing information for the student record.
 - (c) The Evaluation Team which evaluates a student shall have access to the student record of students to whom they are providing services, when such access is required in the performance of their official duties.

The consent of the parent or eligible student shall not be necessary. As required by federal law, the District is required to release the names, addresses and telephone listings of students to military recruiters and institutions of higher education upon request for recruitment and scholarship purposes without prior consent. In addition, the District may release the following about a student without prior consent: a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major fields of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans and directory information such as homeroom assignments. However, in all instances, parents and eligible students have a right to request that this information not be released without prior consent by notifying their school building office in writing by the end of September of each school year.

As of 1998, Massachusetts Law (MGL Chapter 71, S34H) specifies detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents who do not have physical custody of their children. For more information contact the building principal.

In reference to the Internet, use of a student's name, photo or samples of their work on the Internet or District web page must be in accordance with the WRSD Policy P6531 (Policy Relating to Pupil Services Student Internet Policy) which requires prior written parental approval. School principals shall provide appropriate authorization and release to be executed by parent/guardian prior to release, publication or posting of such information.

A parent or eligible student has a right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) in the United States Department of Education (202)-260-3887. If you have any questions regarding this notice, or would like more information and/or a copy of the Massachusetts Department of Education Student Record Regulations, please contact the building principal. All information in this notice complies with Massachusetts Student Record Regulations, The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Wachusett Regional School Committee Policies.

Student Publications (P6515) The WRSD recognizes and supports student publications and other literary activities that give students 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: no school publication will accept advocacy or political advertising; all advertising is subject to review and approval by the principal or a designee relative to content and appropriateness; final editorial control and approval of all materials intended for publication are the responsibility of, and may be subject to approval of the school administration; and a statement indicating editorial control by the school administration regarding all advertising will be included on order forms or other similar correspondence. The principal is editor of student publications.

Audio, Video and/or Stenographic recordings of Meetings (P3813) The WRSC prohibits the audio, video, and/or stenographic recording of parent/teacher conferences and/or Team meeting conducted at WRSD 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 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 conference shall be submitted in writing to the Superintendent of the WRSD no less than three (3) business days prior to said meeting/conference. The Superintendent's decision on any such request shall be final.

PROMOTING CIVIL RIGHTS AND PROHIBITING HARASSMENT, BULLYING, DISCRIMINATION AND HATE CRIMES The WRSD 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 WRSD 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.

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

Bullying Bullying is defined as a form of aggression involving a power imbalance between the bully and victim, where the bully has perceived or actual physical, social and/or psychological power over his/her target(s). Although bullying generally involves a pattern of conduct directed at a victim, depending on the severity of the incident, a single instance of such misconduct may constitute a violation of this Policy.

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

Following a prompt and thorough investigation, the designated official, in consultation with the District Equity Coordinator, will determine whether the allegations have been

substantiated, and whether the Policy, or if the subject of the complaint is a student, the 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.*

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