

Acushnet Elementary School

**800 Middle Road
Acushnet, MA 02743**



STUDENT AND PARENT/ GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

2021-2022

[Acushnet Elementary School Website](#)

TEL: 508-998-0255

FAX: 508-998-0259

Acushnet Elementary School

Home of the Wildcats

Our Vision

We believe if we create respectful collaboration between staff, parents, students, and community members, then students will achieve academic excellence, in a safe environment, which will foster the development of responsible, lifelong learners.

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ACUSHNET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

STAFF DIRECTORY 2021-2022

School Office Hours are from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Monday-Friday

NAME	POSITION	PHONE EXTENSION
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE		
Leah Chesney	Principal	2388
Julianna Pasetto	Assistant Principal	2303
Michelle DeTerra	Administrative Assistant	2300
Cecilia Palhota	P-T Administrative Assistant	2301
GUIDANCE & HEALTH OFFICE		
Nicole Power	School Adjustment Counselor	2317
Jill Carroll	School Adjustment Counselor	2414
	School Nurse	2304
GRADE		
Pre-K		
Erin Sylvia	RM 3	2103
Amie Souza	RM4	2104
KINDERGARTEN		
Jo-ann Silva	RM 1	2101
Catherine Charpentier	RM 2	2102
Margaret Vieira	RM 5	2105
Brianne Silva	RM 06	2106
Jodi Boulds	RM 15	2115
GRADE 1 TEAM		
Caitlin Dorgan	RM 10	2110
Lauri Pierre	RM 11	2111
Jared Alves	RM 12	2112
Stacy Amador	RM 13	2113
Kasie Coelho	RM 14	2114
GRADE 2 TEAM		
Margaret Sullivan	RM 40	2140
Sara Teves	RM 41	2141
Carol Stott	RM 43	2143
Jasmyne Nunes	RM 45	2145
GRADE 3 TEAM		
Lynn Aviza	RM 18	2118
Kelly Cole	RM 19	2119
Shelby Hamilton	RM 20	2120
Marissa Menear	RM 21	2121
Michelle VanVoorhis	RM 22	2122
Melissa Cournoyer	RM 44	2144
GRADE 4 TEAM		
Ryan Powers	RM 25	2125
Rebecca Ashley	RM 26	2126
Christopher Demanche	RM 28	2128
Alyssa Verronneau	RM 30	2130
Amory Fasoli	RM 24	2124

SPECIALTIES	POSITION	PHONE EXT.
Jeanne Downey	Computer, RM 463	2117
Beth Dupre	Music, RM 16	2116
Shelly Powers	Physical Education, Gym	2413
Jill Macolini	RM 36 ART	2136
Patricia Santos	RM 35 STEM	2135
STUDENT SERVICES		
Kim Bettencourt	Special Ed Director	3125
Lucy Sousa	Special Ed Admin Asst	3120
Brian Petrin	Student Serv Data Specialist	3121
Kelsie Turner	SPEC ED Sub Sep Teacher	2142
Lisa Carvalho	SPEC ED Teacher	2108
Caitlyn Coelho	SPEC ED Teacher	2123
Joanna Ingham	SPEC ED Teacher	2147
Linda Paknis	SPEC ED Teacher	2123
Jennifer Deslauriers	SPEC ED Teacher	2129
Child and Family	Room 31	2131
PARAPROFESSIONALS		
Karen Charroux	Paraprofessional	
Megan Tanque	Paraprofessional	
Cheryl Furtado	Paraprofessional	
Betty Cosmo	Paraprofessional	
Deborah Harding	Paraprofessional	
Rebecca Kruger	Paraprofessional	
Rhonda Gomes	Paraprofessional	
Donna Carvalho	Paraprofessional	
Jennifer Aguiar	Paraprofessional	
Deborah Medeiros	Paraprofessional	
Kristine Medeiros	Paraprofessional	
Diane Ash	Paraprofessional	
Kelly Arruda	Paraprofessional	
SUPPORT SERVICES		
Kyle Gallivan	Academic Coach	2133
Christine Snell	Academic Coach	2133
Katherine Lynn	SLP	2132
Rachael Judge	OT	2133/2134
Beth Ryder	SLP-A	2134
Stacy DeOliveira	COTA	2134
Ariel daCosta	School Psychologist	2127
Angela Ruggeri	Director of Curriculum	3130
INTERVENTIONISTS		
Sandy Soderstrom	Title I Facilitator, Office 31	2131
Jamie Lynn-Purnell	ELA Interventionist	2138
Alyson Fleck	Math Interventionist	2138
Ann-Marie Rodrigues	Intervention	2139
BUILDING SUBSTITUTES		

Hannah Bennett	Former Nurse's Office	
Caitlyn Medeiros		
TECHNOLOGY		
Christopher Oliver	Director of Technology	3104
Ken Pamplona	Computer Technician	1009
Kathleen Boren	Computer Technician	1009
MAINTENANCE/CUSTODIAL		
Steven Ouellette	Maintenance	1013
Michael Gonet, Paula Searles	Head Custodian	2312
Alty Hickey / Barry Parker	Custodian	2312
CAFETERIA		
Jeanne Sheridan	Food Service Director	3112
Dee Silva,, Kerri Levasseur	Cafeteria	3122
Katie Berube,Rachel Alves	Cafeteria	2178

2021-2022 GRADING CALENDAR

(This may be revised and updated during the school year.)

1st Trimester	
October 15, 2021	Grades Close for Progress Reports
October 22, 2021	Progress Reports Published on ASPEN's Parent Portal
December 1, 2021	1st Trimester Ends
December 3, 2021	1st Trimester Report Cards Published on ASPEN's Parent Portal
2nd Trimester	
January 21, 2022	Grades Close for Progress Reports
January 28, 2022	Progress Reports Published on ASPEN's Parent Portal
March 14, 2022	2nd Trimester Ends
March 18, 2022	2nd Trimester Report Cards Published on ASPEN's Parent Portal
3rd Trimester	
May 3, 2022	Grades Close for Progress Reports
May 6, 2022	Progress Reports Published on ASPEN's Parent Portal
June 15, 2022	3rd Trimester ends
June 15, 2022	3rd Trimester Report Cards Published on ASPEN's Parent Portal

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to a new school year at Acushnet Elementary School. As we return to school after a year of COVID-19 restrictions, we will be working to return to our pre-pandemic routines as much as possible. However, the pandemic is not quite done with us yet. We may still be wearing masks or sitting three feet apart, but our goal remains the same. Whether student or staff, AES is a community of learners who work to be **respectful**, **responsible**, and **safe** every day. To help in this journey, we have created this 2021-2022 AES Student/Family handbook.

This handbook contains district and school information, policies, procedures, and expectations for student conduct throughout the year. We have also included links to updated policies to comply with state guidelines, ensuring that our school is as safe as possible. Please review this handbook carefully and support our expectations for safe and appropriate learning behaviors with your child. In addition, please refer to this handbook throughout the year as issues arise.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact us. Once you have reviewed this handbook with your child, please fill out the acknowledgement form linked here. If you need a hardcopy for this link, please call the school.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year!

Leah Chesney
Principal

Julianna Pasetto
Assistant Principal

ACUSHNET SCHOOL DISTRICT PHONE NUMBERS 2021-2022

School Office Hours are from 8:00am to 4:00pm Monday-Friday

Acushnet Elementary School	Main Office	508-998-0255
Acushnet Elementary School	Fax	508-998-0259
Acushnet Elementary School	Health	508-998-0257
Acushnet Elementary School	Health Office Fax	774-328-8685
To contact individual classrooms, please use the Main Office number.		
Acushnet Public School District	Special Education Office	508-998-0258
Acushnet Public School District	Special Education Fax	508-998-8321
Acushnet Public School District	Superintendent's Office	508-998-0260
Acushnet Public School District	Superintendent's Fax	508-998-0262
Acushnet Public School District	Business Office	508-998-0261
Ford Middle School	Main Office	508-998-0265
Ford Middle School	Fax	508-998-7316
Ford Middle School	Health Office	508-998-0267
Amaral Bus Co., Acushnet Office	Transportation Office	508-995-5550

Acushnet Public Schools Names to Know:

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Paula J. Bailey

Principal, Acushnet Elementary School, Ms. Leah Chesney

Assistant Principal, Acushnet Elementary School, Ms. Julianna Pasetto

Principal, Ford Middle School, Mrs. Michelle Silvia

Asst. Principal, Ford Middle School, Mr. Scott Johnson

Transportation Director, Amaral Bus Co. Ms. Kelsey Beauregard

School Business Manager Mrs. Kristin Flynn

Chief Technology Director, Mr. Christopher Oliver

Director, Facilities Mr. Steve Oullette

Director, Student Services, Ms. Kim Bettencourt

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Student handbooks are published and issued free of charge to all Acushnet Elementary School students every year. Families are responsible for reviewing the content of the handbook with their children. Extra copies are available at the main office and may be requested in writing. Student handbooks are also available for viewing on the school website and can be accessed through visiting www.acushnetschools.us. A copy of every rule, regulation, or law referenced in this handbook is available at the main desk of the school.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Acushnet Elementary School (AES) is dedicated to the belief that students, parents, and educators are all involved in our children's education in a responsible, nurturing, and supportive way. We believe that all children learn at different paces, possess unique learning styles, and can develop life-long learning skills.

Each child is entitled to a safe, secure, and healthy environment, and therefore, AES creates a warm and inviting atmosphere. Through the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) , we strive to instill in all children a sense of self-worth and self-respect. We stress acceptance, tolerance, and support of all students and believe that all children should be treated fairly and equitably. We model a strong sense of responsibility and teach healthy life skills so that our children may develop positive social interaction skills and grow into confident, cooperative, and productive members of society.

Our curriculum recognizes the educational needs of all students, respects diversity, and fosters life-long learning skills. Diverse styles and needs are met through cooperative learning and hands-on techniques where manipulatives are utilized and skills are integrated into all subject areas. Our well-rounded curriculum infuses the creative arts as well as problem solving, critical thinking, and decision-making skills. Co-curricular programs expose our students to community members and help support our belief of the importance of life-long learning.

Our administration and staff believe that each child is unique and has strengths to develop throughout their school lives. Resources are shared and faculty is supported and supportive. Diverse teaching styles make it possible for us to continually learn from each other and therefore bring our children a model for teaching respect and acceptance of others.

We encourage and solicit community and parent involvement through our Parent-Teacher Organization, parent volunteers, and the School Council. We recognize the value of community members and welcome educational involvement. Our children are our most precious resource, and we at Acushnet Elementary School are committed to developing them to be the best they can be.

SCHOOL MISSION

Our mission at the Acushnet Elementary School, in partnership with staff, parents, and community, is to promote self-esteem in a safe and supportive environment which encourages students to be life-long learners, skillful communicators, creative thinkers, and responsible citizens.

DAILY WILDCAT PLEDGE

Today, I will be the best I can be. I will follow the rules and act safely. Making good choices is the key to showing respect to my teachers, friends, and me!

GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL HOURS

It is expected that students will arrive at school between 8:50 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Please do not drop your child off before 8:50 a.m., as supervision is not provided before 8:50 A.M. Dismissal is at 3:25 p.m. Please see the section on “Arrival and Dismissal” for more information.

Students who arrive by bus will depart the bus in an orderly fashion and will go directly to their classroom. Students who are brought to school by their parents or caregivers should report to the gym doors. Parents also have the option of using “The Chute” to drop off their children (see arrival/dismissal section). If using “The Chute”, please do not get out of your car. Parents should not accompany their children into the school at this entrance, as all visitors must enter through the front doors. These gym doors will be closed at the beginning of the school day, and students who are late must enter through the front doors.

At the start of the school day, students are required to report to their homeroom to await general announcements and opening exercises. Attendance will be taken in the homeroom at 9:05 a.m., and students will be marked as tardy after that time.

All students will receive breakfast on the school day prior. Students should eat this breakfast before coming to school.

AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

Acushnet Elementary School does NOT provide after school transportation for students. Personal transportation is required for students who may be remaining after school for teacher assistance, a school club, or for an activity. Unless the activity he/she is staying after is scheduled to end later, a student should be picked up at the time identified by the teacher/club hosting the activity.

A parent/guardian that chooses to pick up his/her child after school should do so at the main entrance in front of the building at the time identified. In the interest of safety, we ask each parent/guardian to wait for his/her child in the main lobby at the front of the school. Do not proceed to the classroom to pick up your child. Please leave cars parked in appropriately marked spaces in the lots provided. Do NOT park in the circular drive in the front of the building due to safety concerns.

Parents/Guardians must arrange for private transportation for any student who is kept after school for disciplinary purposes.

SCHOOL-RELATED PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

The following guidelines may be helpful for addressing concerns or problems.

1. Any concerns regarding a school-related matter should **first** be raised by the parent with the staff member **most directly involved**.
2. If the matter remains unresolved, the parent may wish to speak with the building Principal or Assistant Principal. Appointments can be scheduled by contacting the office (508-998-0255).
3. If the matter is still unresolved, the parent may wish to speak with the Superintendent (508-998-0260).

4. If the matter remains unresolved, the parent may wish to bring it to the attention of the School Committee by writing a letter to the Acushnet School Committee.

We urge parents to use the progressive steps outlined above as most problems can be addressed satisfactorily by the teacher or other staff member most directly involved.

Starting “at the top” inevitably results in no decision and the matter will be directed to the staff member most directly involved. The following are examples (not an all-inclusive list) of issues that are most appropriately addressed at the levels indicated:

Teachers:

Student homework assignments, quizzes, tests

Course content, instructional materials, academic progress, extra help

Issues related to classroom discipline, relationships with students and staff

School Adjustment Counselor:

Problems at home and/or at school; teacher & student, student and other students

Student records

Personal matters relating to student development, behaviors, interactions with others

Referrals for outside agencies

Office of Student Services:

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) questions/concerns

Early Childhood questions/concerns

Homeschool contact

Special education testing

Questions about 504 plans

Questions about English Language Learner services or homeless student services

Compliance under Civil Rights law (including Title IX and Section 504) and regulations

Principals/Assistant Principals:

Any issue arising when no other staff member can be identified

Student placement issues (instructional level, team placement, etc.)

Instructional and extra-curricular program issues

Issues related to the physical plant

Complaints, dissatisfaction, or concerns regarding school personnel

School-wide discipline, bus conduct, school policies/procedures

District Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment:

Curriculum planning/development

Professional development

Concerns or questions about the curriculum

Superintendent:

Questions regarding application of School Committee policies or administrative procedures

School Committee meetings and agenda items

Any school system records or documents

Budgetary matters, hiring and supervision of staff

Complaints, dissatisfaction, or concerns regarding school personnel which were not addressed at the Principal's level
Transportation matters

School Committee:

Matters pertaining to School Committee policy and procedures
Concerns about specific courses to be added/deleted/changed
Complaints/concerns about the Superintendent
School Committee agenda items and minutes of meetings
Budgetary matters
Long-range planning (facilities, programs, etc.)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1) What time does school start? 8:50 A.M. Doors will open at 8:50 A.M. and close at 9:05 A.M.
- 2) What time are students dismissed? Dismissal time: 3:25 P.M.
- 3) I have to dismiss my child early for a doctor's appointment. What is the latest time I can dismiss my child before the end of the day? If you need to dismiss your child for doctor/dentist appointments or for any other reason, it must be before 3:00 P.M.. Send in a note with your child in the morning so that the office knows what time you will be dismissing your child and please name the adult who is dismissing your child.
- 4) My child is going home with a friend and taking the bus with them. Is that ok? No. Students that ride the bus must be dropped off at their designated location based on their home address. We do not allow bus transfers.
- 5) Do I need to notify the school if my child is out sick? Yes. Please contact the Acushnet Elementary School nurse's office at 508-998-0257 to report that your child will be out due to an illness.
- 6) If I call my child out sick, will that be an excused absence? No. All absences are considered unexcused with the exception of the following: medical appointment/ illness (with doctor's note), death in family, religious holiday, court appearance, suspension, school approved visit to a high school, and disability-related absences. All other absences are considered unexcused.
- 7) What if my child is not in school (or was dismissed or arrived significantly late) on the day of an after school event? You may not attend the event if you have been absent from school that day, unless extenuating circumstances prevail that have been discussed with an administrator.
- 8) What do I do if my child misses the bus? Parents/guardians would need to drive their child to school.
- 10) What do I do if my child is out sick? Students should check the Google Classroom for all missing assignments. They will be permitted the number of days to make-up work equal to the number of days absent (except in the case of a family vacation).
- 11) What happens if my child lost something in the school (books, musical instruments, sneakers and/or lunch box)? First, have your child check the classroom and the cafeteria. They can also check the lost and found box in the main hallway. Parents-Please feel free to check the lost and found throughout the year.

VISITING THE SCHOOL

All school doors are locked and video surveillance is in use at all times. All visitors must gain admission through the main entrance. All visitors who are determined to have legitimate school business will be required to present a state issued photo ID to be entered into our new electronic iVisitor system. Any person without legitimate school business who attempts to gain access or who gains access to the building will be considered a trespasser. Police intervention may result.

VOLUNTEERING

For the protection of our students, all volunteers must agree to a criminal background check (CORI) and receive clearance before they are able to work as a volunteer at the elementary school. This includes community members and parents who would like to participate in field trips and other school-sponsored events. If you are interested in becoming a school volunteer, please ask for a Parent/Guardian/Community Member Volunteer Form and CORI Request Form from the main office.

While we appreciate the help volunteers give to our school, parents who volunteer in a classroom on a regular basis will be asked not to volunteer solely in the classroom of their child. As a school, we find that it is beneficial to all children if they are independent learners in school. Having parents in their child's classroom can make this difficult. Volunteers may be asked to do jobs outside of the classroom, including copying or other work for the grade-level team.

When a teacher cannot accommodate all of the volunteers who offer their assistance for the classroom, he/she will contact parents for field trips and other activities as needed. The building principal's approval is needed for all voluntary roles other than volunteering as a chaperone.

TARDINESS

Students who arrive at the school after attendance is taken at 9:00 a.m. are tardy and must sign in at the office. Habitually tardy students will be brought to the attention of the administration. A meeting with the principal or assistant principal and the student's parent/guardian may be requested and notice may be provided to the attendance officer.

ABSENCES

Chronic absenteeism only serves as a constant interruption to a student's learning process. Frequent absenteeism is directly linked to poor grades and lack of academic progress. The more absences a student accumulates, the less he or she can be expected to adequately participate in and understand classroom activities. **In addition, Massachusetts State Law requires that every boy and girl attend school each day that school is in session unless unable to do so because of illness or some other legitimate reason (MGL, Chapter 76, §§1, 2).** Chronic absenteeism is defined as a total of school year absences that equal 10% or more, approximately 18 school days. **Family vacations do not qualify as excused absenteeism under Massachusetts law; therefore we will no longer accept the vacation form.** The school principal or a designee will make a reasonable effort to meet with the parent or guardian of a student who has 5 or more unexcused absences to develop action steps for student attendance.

Each day that a student is absent from school, parents/guardians should call the Student Absent Line after 8:00 a.m. to report their child's absence. To access and leave a message on the Student Absent Line, call the main office at 508-998-0255 and press "1." The school nurse will attempt to contact each parent/guardian who fails to contact the school to inform the school of their child's absence.

When the student returns to school, he/she should have a note from the parent/guardian documenting the reason for the absence, even if the absence was called in. The note should be given to the classroom teacher, who will forward it to the main office.

A student who is out for three or more consecutive days because of an illness or injury must bring in a doctor's note to verify the illness or injury. This doctor's note must specify the date(s) the doctor feels the student was too ill or injured to attend school.

An absence is defined as a student missing a school day. There are two types of absence: unexcused or excused.

Excused absences are legitimate reasons for being absent from school. The following absences are considered excused:

1. Medical Appointment/ illness (with doctor's note)
2. Death in Family
3. Religious Holiday
4. Court Appearance
5. Suspension
6. Disability related absence

PLEASE NOTE: All other absences are considered unexcused.

Unexcused absences are unacceptable reasons for being absent from school. **Parents/Guardians will receive a letter notifying them when their child has exceeded five (5) unexcused absences.**

Subsequent letters will be sent as needed for chronic absenteeism. Parents/Guardians of students who are determined to have excessive absences from school will be identified and may be referred to the school attendance officer, who may refer the matter to the Department of Child and Family Services or the Bristol County Juvenile Court for violation of state law.

FAMILY VACATIONS

Extended absences due to vacation time are highly discouraged. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to schedule family vacations during school vacation periods or at other times when school is not in session. In the event a family vacation is scheduled during school time, parents/guardians are required to notify the school administration in writing prior to these vacations. Please note that MGL, Chapter 76, Section 2, requires students to attend school while it is in session unless a valid reason exists, so these absences are considered unexcused absences (see ABSENCES above).

Pre-assigned work may be given prior to the absence period at the discretion of the teacher, provided that work does not require direct instruction. The student bears the responsibility of the actual completion of all work missed due to absences because of a family vacation. The parents/guardians bear the responsibility for ensuring the completion of the work.

MAKE-UP WORK

Students will be permitted to complete all of the work missed within a period of time equal to half the number of days of the family vacation (not to exceed seven school days). Any work not made up after the allotted time will receive a zero.

A parent guardian can request make-up work by calling the main office secretary before 10:30 a.m. The make-up work will be gathered and sent to the office where it can be picked up by the parent/guardian in the afternoon between 1:30 - 3:30 p.m., or work may be sent home with a sibling or neighboring student.

CLASSROOM REQUESTS

Due to the large number of students in the school, no parent requests for specific teachers can be accepted. If there are specific concerns regarding your child's placement, please contact your child's current teacher or the office prior to the end of the current school year.

TELEPHONE USE

If a student needs to use the phone, he/she is encouraged to do so during lunch. We ask that a parent/guardian only contact the school to relay messages to their child if a message is necessary pertaining to some emergency situation. Due to the high volume of calls received each day, the main office cannot be responsible for passing along messages between different families or individuals in a non-emergency situation.

WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS & ELECTRONIC DEVICES

A wireless communication device includes, but is not limited to, the following: laptop computers, cell phones, Smartphones and tablets.

Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, the following: CD players, digital media players, electronic games, cameras, and laser pointers. Students will not be permitted to use wireless communication devices or electronic devices during regular school hours unless it is for an approved reason. (Please see **Definitions of Minor and Major Infractions.**)

Before entering the building, students shall turn off their wireless communications and electronic devices and place them out of sight (pocket, backpack, purse, etc.). Students who have these devices out during the school day or disrupt the learning environment with these devices may have them collected. Parents will need to come to the school to pick up the devices at the office.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

The Acushnet Public Schools maintains the use of video cameras on school buses and on school grounds for the purpose of enhancing security and safety, maintaining order, and undertaking disciplinary investigations. Video cameras are installed in public areas only and no sound will be monitored or recorded in connection with these video cameras.

Any video recordings on school buses, in school buildings or school grounds are the sole property of the Acushnet Public Schools. Consistent with applicable law, authorized school officials may access and use recorded information as necessary. Release of video recordings to non-school officials are generally prohibited and, in limited circumstances, will be released only as permissible pursuant to applicable law and with the advance permission of the Superintendent or his/her designee.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Pursuant to Massachusetts Regulations 603 CMR 46, all public school districts must have a physical restraint policy on file. The Acushnet Public Schools Physical Restraint Policy is available for review either on the district's website or in the principal's office of either school building in the district.

INTERNET WEBSITES

Acushnet Public Schools Website: Acushnet Elementary School Website:

www.acushnetschools.us/elementary-school *Please note that the AES website will have important dates added throughout the year.*

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

Please do not call the school. The Acushnet Public Schools utilizes a call alert system in order to provide parents/guardians with information regarding important events (such as report card dissemination and graduation dates) and unanticipated events (such as unplanned school closings). School cancellations may be heard on WBSM 1420 AM radio, WNBH 1340 AM radio, WCTK 98.1 FM radio, and WFHN 107.1 FM radio.

Cancellations will also be posted on the following television stations and websites: Channel 4, Channel 5, Channel 6, Channel 7, Channel 10, Channel 12, Channel 25, and the Acushnet Public Schools website at: www.acushnetschools.us.

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

The office of superintendent is open on weekdays from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. The office is located at the rear of the Ford Middle School (FMS) building, with the entrance being located on the right side of FMS. The phone number for the office is 508-998-0260.

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES BY OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS

Arrangements for building use by local organizations during after school hours must be made through the Business Office.

ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION

This notification is required by the Asbestos Emergency Response Act. A copy of our school's Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Plan is available at the main office or the Superintendent's Office during regular school hours.

Any inquiries regarding asbestos-containing materials in our schools should be directed to the Superintendent's Office.

RESIDENCY

In accordance with M.G.L. C. 76, S. 5 & 6, students must attend the public school in the town where they actually reside. A student may not claim residence in a town for the sole purpose of attending school there. If an investigation by school personnel verifies out-of-district residency, a parent/guardian may be held legally and fiscally responsible. If you have a question on this, please contact the main office of the school.

WITHDRAWAL OR TRANSFER FROM SCHOOL

When withdrawing or transferring from the Acushnet Elementary School, a parent/guardian must notify the school. Please be prepared to provide the name and address of the new school from which your child will be attending and your new place of residence. Students will then be issued a transfer card, immunization records, academic grades up to the point of withdrawal/transfer, a current IEP if applicable, etc. If it is found that a student has moved from the district without notifying the Acushnet Public Schools, the student's records may be forwarded to their new school without written consent.

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ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

The student record contains all information concerning a student that is kept by the school district and which personally identifies the student. It consists of the temporary record and the transcript. For purposes of these procedures, custodial parent refers to a divorced or separated parent who has physical custody of the child, and the non-custodial parent is the parent who does not have physical custody of the child. Non-custodial parents may not be eligible to access their child's student record or may have to follow certain procedures in order to access the student record. See below.

Access by the Eligible Student or Parent (Except Non-Custodial Parents)

The eligible student (any student who is 14 years of age or older or who has entered 9th grade) or the parent (except non-custodial parents) may request access to the student record and shall have access within ten days after the initial request. Upon request, copies of any information contained in the student record shall be provided to the eligible student or the parent. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the cost of reproduction, may be charged. If an eligible student or parent would like access to the student's record, please contact the main office at (508) 998-0255.

Any student, regardless of age, shall have the right pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, section 34A to receive a copy of his/her transcript. The eligible student or the parent shall have the right, upon request, to meet with professionally qualified school personnel and to have any of the contents of the student record interpreted. A student over the age of 18 may limit the rights and provisions of the Massachusetts Student Records regulations that extend to his/her parent by making such request in writing to the school principal or superintendent. However, the student may not limit the parent's right to inspect the student record.

Access by Third Parties

An eligible student or parent may have the student record inspected or interpreted by a third party of their choice. Such third party shall present specific written consent of the eligible student or parent prior to gaining access to the student record.

Access by Non-Custodial Parents

It is necessary for non-custodial parents to submit a copy of the custody agreement or order, and any subsequent changes made thereto, to the District so that district personnel may identify which of the parents has physical custody of the child. The non-custodial parent may access his/her child's record unless:

1. the parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student, and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
2. the parent has been denied visitation, or
3. the parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
4. there is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.

In the case of a non-custodial parent who is eligible to access the student record, i.e., does not fit any of the four (4) categories under 1-4 above, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal. Upon receipt of the request, the principal and/or his/her designee shall immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary

language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth under 1-4 above.

When the student record is released to the non- custodial parent, the school will delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non- custodial parents. In addition, such records will be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

If you have any questions regarding the student record's policy or desire more detailed information concerning the state regulations, please contact the Main Office. Upon request, a copy of the state regulations can be provided to you.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORMS

Parents/Guardians of each student are asked to complete an emergency information form so that we may locate parents/guardians or an approved adult in the case of an emergency or school business. **Only adults authorized on the form will be allowed to dismiss the listed student. It is essential that correct and up-to-date contact information be provided on these forms, as this information will be used to contact you in case of an emergency with your student.** If a special situation requires a change in dismissal for your student, please contact the school so special arrangements can be made for your child.

Only adults authorized on the form will be allowed to dismiss the listed student. It is essential that correct and up-to-date contact information be provided on these forms, as this information will be used to contact you in case of an emergency with your student. If a special situation requires a change in dismissal for your student, please contact the school so special arrangements can be made for your child.

In order to keep our records up to date, please inform the office if you change your address, phone number, or work number, within one week. The information from current, updated forms is entered into our student management system, Aspen.

SCHOOL PICTURES

The school contracts with a company to offer school pictures as a service. Purchase of pictures is voluntary. Schedules for pictures will be released in advance of the specific days scheduled.

INSURANCE

Student insurance is offered early in the school year at a nominal fee and is optional.

DRESS

The objective of this dress code is to ensure that student dress does not interfere with the educational environment of the school while allowing students to dress comfortably within these limits. We expect students to maintain the type of appearance that is not distracting or offensive to students, teachers, or the educational process of the school. There is appropriate and inappropriate attire for all of life's activities. Keeping these ideas in mind, please help your student adhere to the following guidelines.

General Guidelines

- Tops with low necklines, without backs, or that expose the midriff will not be permitted.

- Halter-tops, basketball tank top jerseys, muscle shirts, and tank tops or spaghetti straps will not be permitted unless a shirt or t-shirt is worn underneath.
- Underwear exposed in any form will not be permitted.
- Pajamas, slippers, and other sleepwear will not be permitted except on designated school spirit days.
- Hats, caps, hoods, scarves, bandanas, or sweatbands will not be permitted except on designated spirit days.
- Any clothing or jewelry with obscene, profane language or pictures will not be permitted.
- Clothing which promotes acts or substances that are illegal for the student's age will not be permitted.
- Flip-flop sandals will not be permitted. Footwear on the playground must have closed heels.
- Students are not permitted to bring or wear outdoor clothing to class, with the exception of physical education. Outdoor clothing should be removed and secured in specific classroom areas for the duration of the school day. Outdoor clothing includes but is not limited to: coats/jackets, knitted hats, gloves/mittens, and scarves.

The administration reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of clothing consistent with these guidelines. A student whose dress is considered inappropriate for school will be required to make arrangements for more appropriate dress and may be removed from school.

STUDENT SEARCHES

A student may be searched by the principal or assistant principal, whenever there is reasonable suspicion that the student is, or has been, in possession of contraband or materials indicating a violation of the discipline code or the law or where the student has violated or is violating either the discipline code or the law. The search itself will be conducted in a reasonable manner, given the age and sex of the student as well as the nature of the infraction. A witness will always be present for any search.

VALUABLES & STUDENT BELONGINGS

Students are responsible for safeguarding their belongings. Valuables or sums of money should not be brought to school. The school is not responsible for any lost or damaged belongings.

LOST AND FOUND

Any item found in the building or on school grounds should be turned into the office. Lost items not claimed after an extended time period will be donated to charity. If you have lost an item, check with the classroom teacher first and then with the office. Lost and found items are generally displayed in the front lobby of the school until they are donated to a local charity at the middle and end of the school year.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Counseling services are available to all students as a resource for parents for either school-related or personal problems. Our guidance counselors provide group and individual crisis counseling, if needed. They may also coordinate referrals to outside agencies, monitor each student's emotional, social, and academic progress, and work with students, parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators to improve student achievement. Parents/Guardians or students wishing to see a counselor may leave a message through the main office secretary.

LIBRARY

When in the library, each student must follow library rules and exhibit proper behavior. Students who need information for book reports or other reference materials should use this time also for meeting those academic needs, with the help of the classroom teacher.

All resources checked out of the library are the responsibility of the student that signs for them. Any lost books or materials must be paid for by the student who signed for them by the end of the school year.

CAFETERIA

Students are required to conduct themselves in an orderly manner to and from the cafeteria. Once in the cafeteria, good manners, courtesy, and proper eating habits are expected. Students generally sit within the class groups at assigned tables. However, some seating arrangements may be different, depending on the individual grade level. Quiet times at the end of lunch periods are also required at all grade levels.

Hot lunches and milk are available daily under the direction of the food service director. The cost of school lunch will be available on the school website. Food and/or drinks are not to be removed from or consumed outside of the cafeteria.

The cafeteria utilizes a “point of sale” system. Parents/Guardians may go online to www.mynutrikids.com at any time to view their child’s balance, add money to their account, or to view what their child has been purchasing during lunchtime.

FREE/REDUCED LUNCH MEAL APPLICATIONS

While all meals will be free for the 2021-22 school year, we still need families to complete a meal application. They are available on the district website and at www.myschoolapps.com.

If you qualify for free and reduced meal benefits- you may be eligible for future Pandemic EBT benefits.

Through P-EBT, eligible school children receive temporary emergency nutrition benefits loaded on EBT cards that are used to purchase food. Children who would have received free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Act if their schools were not closed or operating with reduced hours or attendance for at least 5 consecutive days are eligible to receive P-EBT benefits. P-EBT benefits are available in any school year in which there is a public health emergency declaration based on an outbreak of SARS-CoV-2; as well as during at any covered summer period that follows a school year during which there was a public health emergency designation based on an outbreak of SAR-CoV-2

Please note: If a parent/guardian has one child in the elementary school, and one child in the middle school (or more than one in each), a separate form does not need to be filled out for each child.

GUIDELINES FOR FOOD AND BEVERAGES

All foods and beverages sold or provided in the public schools shall comply with the Massachusetts School Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages and the district’s Wellness Policy. This policy can be found on the district’s website. Soda and sports drinks shall not be sold to students during the instructional day. Classroom celebrations are limited to once a month. Please check with your

child's teacher for more information. All outside food brought to school must be reviewed by the school nurse.

FUNDRAISING AND THE SALE OF GOODS

The approval of all fundraising and the sale of goods must comply with policies KHA *Solicitations/Selling and Fundraising* and KG *Use of Facilities* which can be found on the district's website.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Acushnet Public School System requires students to take an active part in physical education and to participate to the best of their ability. Students should be prepared for their physical education class by wearing sneakers that are appropriate for use on the gym flooring or outdoors. In inclement weather, students who wear boots to school should bring sneakers to wear in their physical education class. Students may be excused from physical education classes at the recommendation (in writing) of a physician. Written documentation from a physician should be submitted to the school nurse. The school nurse may also excuse a student from physical education class if she provides the physical education teacher with a note for an occasion of illness/injury.

RECESS/OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Students have recess at one of the designated play areas around the school. Recess periods are monitored by school staff that circulate through the play area and reinforce all school rules and expectations. There are some general requirements for all students:

- ❖ Students must play within sight of the staff.
- ❖ Balls must be used away from the school building; all equipment must be returned to its proper location at the end of recess.
- ❖ Hardballs, aluminum or wooden bats may not be used.
- ❖ In cooler temperatures, students must be properly dressed for outdoor play; students who have inadequate outdoor clothing on may not be allowed to go outside.
- ❖ Students will remain outdoors unless given special permission by the teacher on duty to enter the building or leave the recess area.
- ❖ Time out areas will be used for settling playground incidents or disputes.
- ❖ Flip flops, crocs, and any non-supportive footwear are not allowed for safety reasons.
- ❖ Students must use all playground equipment appropriately, as directed by staff on duty.

On Big Toy:

- ❖ Six children or less on climbing walls at one time. Climb up or down the walls; do not jump off of or climb over the top of climbing walls.
- ❖ Only sneakers are allowed on Big Toy; sandals, flip flops, dress shoes, crocs, or any other footwear are not permitted for safety reasons.
- ❖ Big Toy equipment should be used as designed; students should not try to climb over or through existing safety equipment or railings.
- ❖ Students should walk in the Big Toy area and stay within sight of the teachers on duty at all times.

SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS

Occasionally, field trips may be arranged to complement our school programs. Students are to conduct themselves as if they were in school during field trips. In addition, as a condition of being allowed to attend field trips, all students are required to have permission slips and a signed release form on file prior to the activity or they will not be allowed to attend. For health and safety issues, the parent/guardian may be asked to accompany the child on a school field trip.

FIRE AND EVACUATION DRILLS

Each area of the building has assigned emergency exits. During evacuation drills, students are to leave the building quickly and orderly. Silence is to be maintained throughout the entire drill so that instruction from the teachers and/or fire officials can be heard. Emergency exits are posted in each room of the building. If an evacuation occurs while a student is separated from his/her class, they are to exit the building through the closest exit and report to the nearest teacher.

SCHOOL PARTIES / FUNCTIONS

Students who display good conduct are eligible to attend school parties and other functions. Admission to all functions may require the purchase of a ticket. Receiving an out- of -school suspension or obtaining poor conduct grades in a given term may exclude participation in school-sponsored dances, parties, and functions that take place in that term.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The school council is based on M.G.L. c. 71 §59C, which describes a school council as a group consisting of the school principal, parents of students attending the school (selected by the parents of students attending such school via elections held by the parent teacher organization), teachers, and other persons. M.G.L. c. 71 §59C states, “...*The school council, including the school principal, shall meet regularly and shall assist in the identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school, make recommendations to the principal for the development, implementation and assessment of the curriculum accommodation plan required pursuant to section 38Q1/2, shall assist in the review of the annual school budget and in the formulation of a school improvement plan...*”

If anyone would like to be considered for serving on the school council, they should complete a [School Improvement Council Form](#) and return it to the school office.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL/BUS PROCEDURES

Private Transportation Drop-Off and Pickup Procedures

Students in Grades 1- 4: Morning Student Drop-off (school doors open at 8:50 a.m.)

Option 1: “PARK & WALK” Entrance: You may enter the entrance nearest to the DPW (on the southeast side of Ford Middle School) to access the middle parking lot. Please note that you may also use the main entrance to access the middle parking lot; however, you must never use this main entrance when any of the busses’ flashing lights are on. Once parked in the middle parking lot, you walk your children to the gym foyer doors near the orange cones and via the sidewalks. Please stay with your children until the doors open. Then you may leave the area again via the sidewalk and walk by the cones to ensure a safe passage to the parking lot while “the chute” cars are dropping off their students at the gym doors. **Exit:** You may exit the parking lot by driving towards Ford Middle School and looping around the back of Ford Middle School and exiting on the southeast side of the school or exit via the main entrance (if the busses are no longer present).

Option 2: “THE CHUTE” Entrance: You may enter into the driveway to the school (near the playground) and wait in the car line (“the chute”). Drivers must not leave their vehicles while in the chute no matter where they are in the line order. In accordance with M.G.L. c.76 §17, cars shall not idle for more than 5 minutes to protect the quality of air. Please make sure you move up as close to the STOP SIGN as possible to ensure that several cars are in front of the doors to allow multiple children to exit their cars. Also, you are not allowed to pass a car in the chute unless instructed by one of the personnel supervising the drop-off. We understand that a lot of people are trying to get to work in the morning and with everyone’s cooperation, this procedure will ensure an efficient and safe drop-off for everyone. **Exit:** Once your child exits your car you can follow the car in front of you around the parking area and exit the same way you came in. Remember there is NO PASSING CARS unless instructed by personnel.

Students in Grades 1 – 4: Afternoon Student Pickup (students released at 3:25 p.m.)

Option 1: “PARK & WALK” Entrance: You may enter the entrance nearest to the DPW (on the southeast side of Ford Middle School) to access the middle parking lot. Please note that you may also use the main entrance to access the middle parking lot; however, you must never use this main entrance when any of the busses are present. Be sure to bring your yellow name card placard with you to the Gym Doors. If you need one, please let your child’s teacher know. Once your students are released to you at the gym doors, please proceed via the sidewalk and walk by the cones to ensure a safe passage to the parking lot while the cars in the chute are picking up their students.

Exit: You may exit the parking lot in the same manner as stated above for student drop-off.

Option 2: “THE CHUTE” Entrance: You may enter into the driveway to the school (near the playground) and wait in the car line (“the chute”). Once again, drivers must not leave their vehicles while in the chute no matter where they are in the line order. Please make sure you move up as close to the STOP SIGN as possible to ensure that several cars are in front of the doors to allow multiple children to enter their cars. While in “the chute” a staff member will

approach your car and ask for you to show your child's QR code or placard. Please have it ready. You may also place it in the car window or passenger side dashboard. Alternatively, you may show it on your phone. On rainy days it is best to roll down your window to show it. If you lose your QR code/placard please contact the principal: juliannapasetto@acushnetschools.us or leahchesney@acushnetschools.us and you will be sent a new one.

Exit: You may exit in the same manner as stated above for student drop-off.

Kindergarten Students Only: Morning Student Drop-off (school doors open at 8:50 a.m.) and Afternoon Student Pickup (students released at 3:25 p.m.) There is no "chute" option for kindergarten students. Kindergarten students that are brought to school must use a slightly different version of the "Park & Walk" method as stated above when dropping off or picking up students. It is basically the same method as above, including having a yellow name card placard visible; however, kindergarten students are dropped off and picked up from the side door closest to the library (on the southeast portion of the building). The reason for the separate drop-off and pickup has to do with alleviating congestion in the chute. If you have a kindergarten student and a student in another grade level, you will need to use the "Park & Walk" method consistent with each child as stated above.

During dismissal, please have your child's name tag with you and visible.

AES Staff asks for your patience and understanding as we strive to keep your children safe with this process.

See Map of School below:



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING DISMISSAL

Regular daily dismissal takes place at 3:25 p.m. Early dismissal from school is discouraged. Should it become necessary to dismiss your child early, parents must send a note that includes: date, time of dismissal, your child's teacher and a brief reason why. The note should be given to the child's teacher at the beginning of the day. If someone other than the child's parent or guardian is picking up the student, the person's name should be included on the note and the child's Emergency Card. In this case, the school may require identification before the child is released. When it is time for the child to be dismissed, the parent must come to the office to pick up the child and sign the child out for the day. No child will be sent out to a waiting car. A child will be released ONLY to someone on an Emergency Card.

***Note:** Early release is 12:50 p.m., unless otherwise noted. Pre-School is dismissed at 11:45 a.m. If an emergency arises and requires a change in dismissal information for your child, please contact the office as soon as possible. It is very difficult to make changes in a child's dismissal at the end of the day due to the busy nature of dismissal. Therefore, a scheduled doctor's appointment is not an emergency. Please do not call to change a child's dismissal status after 2:30 p.m. on the day the child is being dismissed.

BUSES

Riding the bus is a privilege. If a student does not follow the rules and regulations, the student will be reported to the administration for necessary disciplinary action. Disciplinary action will depend on the severity and persistence of bus infractions. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, warnings, seat assignments, bus probation, and suspension or revocation of bus privileges altogether. Each incident report will be sent home to the student's parent/guardian. The following suspensions are guidelines only and the principal reserves the right to waive warning, increase the suspension, or attach additional consequences depending on the severity of the offense or of the frequency of offenses:

- First Violation: Verbal warning by driver
- Second Violation: Written warning by driver and discussion with administration
- Third Violation: Written warning by driver and discussion with parents/guardians
- Fourth Violation: Five day suspension
- Fifth Violation: Ten day suspension
- Sixth Violation: Long term suspension up to one school year

BEHAVIOR ABOARD THE BUS

- 1) When entering or leaving the bus, students must follow the instructions and directions of the bus driver.
- 2) Riders must remain in seats or in place when the bus is in motion.
- 3) Parents/Guardians will be responsible for any defacing or damaging of the bus by their child.
- 4) The following behaviors are prohibited:
 - A. Pushing or wrestling
 - B. Failure to comply with the bus driver
 - C. Refusal to wear a mask
 - D. Annoying or harassing other passengers, either through verbal or physical conduct, or otherwise disturbing their possessions.

- E. Talking to the driver while he/she is driving
- F. Throwing objects within the bus or out of the bus
- G. Climbing over the seats
- H. Opening or closing windows
- I. Leaning out of the windows
- J. Littering the bus
- K. Whistling and shouting
- L. Smoking
- M. Any other violations of rules as set forth in this handbook. Bus behavior infractions will be reported to the school administration for disciplinary action.

BEHAVIOR AT THE BUS STOP

Bus stops are viewed as an extension of the school. There will be consequences for students who do not behave properly at bus stops. Orderly behavior and respect for private property are required. Bus riders must be on time at the bus stop. Bus drivers will not wait. Students are to wait for the bus at assigned stops in an orderly manner until the bus comes to a complete stop. They are to board the bus in an orderly fashion as directed by the monitor or driver. Students may not harass the public or damage public or private property at the assigned stops.

CHANGING BUS STOPS

A student must get on and off of the bus at his/her regular bus stop for the entire school year. This bus stop will be determined within the first week of the year but may be changed as determined by the bus company and school administration

If it becomes necessary to change the student's bus stop before the end of the year due to relocation, change in caregiving, or other family emergency, please notify the school, in writing, before the expected change is to take place. Also, Amaral Bus Company, who provides transportation, should be notified by calling 508-995-5550, so that any concerns, necessary arrangements, or issues can be discussed.

BUS STUDENTS RETURNING TO SCHOOL

There have been several incidents where there has not been anyone present at the end of the school day to receive their child from their bus drop-off location. Families of grades 3 and 4 students may opt to have their child, without an adult, walk home from the bus stop pending written permission and approval. When this occurs, the bus driver must return the student to their school at the end of the route. When a parent/guardian is not present at the student's drop-off location at the end of the school day, the following procedure will be instituted:

1st Incident: Parent is notified

2nd Incident: Parent is notified and a letter is sent home recommending private after school daycare (such as our onsite YMCA after school program) to prevent loss of transportation

3rd Incident: Loss of transportation (1) day and meeting with school administration

4th Incident: Loss of transportation (3) days

5th Incident: Loss of transportation (5) days and 2nd meeting with school administration

6th Incident: Loss of transportation (10) days and possible referral to the local social service agency for intervention support

7th Incident: Possible permanent loss of transportation for the remainder of the school year

HEALTH DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Acushnet Elementary School has a nurse available during the school day to address students' needs. The health department follows the regulations and guidelines established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the attending school physician, and the school committee. The school nurse uses nursing assessment to determine whether a child should be sent home ill or retained in school. The nurse is responsible for maintaining confidential health records, immunization records, providing first aid, illness assessment, administration of medications and is available to discuss questions or concerns related to your child. If a health issue is of a concern to us, we will request that your primary care physician or emergency department of your choice evaluate your child.

ALLERGY MEDICATION

All parents/guardians of students with a known anaphylactic food or insect allergy should provide the school with notification of this condition and an epi-pen. If an epi-pen is not provided, please provide a physician's note stating that there is not a need for an epi-pen at school.

FIELD TRIP MEDICATION

Certain staff members are trained by the nurse in the administration of epi-pen medications during field trips. This delegation is authorized through 105 CMR §210.100.

A Medication Administration Plan will be developed for every student who receives prescription medication at school, as a provision for prescription medication administration in the case of field trips and other short-term special school events. Every effort shall be made to obtain a nurse or school staff member trained in prescription medication administration to accompany students at special school events. When this is not possible, the school nurse may delegate prescription medication administration to another responsible adult. Written consent from the parent or guardian for the named responsible adult to administer the prescription medication shall be obtained. The school nurse shall instruct the responsible adult on how to administer the prescription medication to the child.

FIRST AID

Treatment will be administered for minor injuries during the school day. When a student becomes seriously injured, the parent/guardian is notified immediately. If they cannot be reached in an emergency, a person designated on the child's emergency information form will then be notified and the student will be transported to St. Luke's Hospital. All open areas of the skin must be covered with a Band-Aid, dressing or clothing. Minor injuries such as swelling or sprains will be treated with ice and splints or ace wraps.

ILLNESSES

Children who are sick **should not** be sent to school. They should be fever-free/free of vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. The school nurse will send home any child who she assesses is ill or who is not able to perform effectively during the school day. Each morning that your child is sick, a call to the school explaining his/her absence is required. The nurse will then call each parent/guardian of those who have unexplained absences. If your child is ill for 3 consecutive days, a note from the doctor is required.

The school nurse will send home an ill child, as determined by the following guidelines: Temperature of 100 or above Vomiting/Diarrhea Continuing malaise after rest and quiet.

Any other medical or emergency conditions unable to be resolved within the framework of allowable treatments.

Similarly, certain communicable diseases require exclusion from school for a particular period. Here are some examples:

Influenza: A child with flu-like symptoms should stay home for at least 24 hours after being fever-free without using fever-reducing medicines like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil).

Chicken Pox: A child must be excluded for 5 days after the last eruption or receipt by the school nurse of written permission from the child's doctor. We report these cases to the Board of Health.

Strep Throat: A child is excluded and may return after 24 hours of medication or earlier with written permission from the child's doctor.

Conjunctivitis: A child must be excluded and may return with a doctor's written permission 24 hours after treatment is begun. If the child has a noted history of allergic conjunctivitis, he/she is not considered contagious.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Immunization requirements are set by the Department of Public Health and may change from time to time.

Vaccines can prevent some childhood diseases. *Please provide physician documentations of:*

- ❖ DTaP/DTP/DT/Td (Diphtheria/ Tetanus/ Pertussis)
- ❖ Polio ❖ MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
- ❖ Chicken pox disease or vaccine HIB (for children entering day care or kindergarten)
- ❖ Hepatitis B
- ❖ Td (Tetanus/ diphtheria on entry to 7th grade)

Immunizations are available through:

- ❖ Child's primary care physician
- ❖ Acushnet Board of Health
- ❖ New Bedford Well Child Clinic 181 Hillman Street, Building #3 New Bedford, MA (508) 991-6292 Monday-Friday, 1:00-3:45 p.m. Fees may apply for vaccines

EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL FOR LACK OF CURRENT VACCINATIONS

If the school health record precedes a transfer student and immunizations are needed, the student must not be admitted unless required immunizations are scheduled to be administered within 15 calendar days.

If children are already in school, including transfer students, they must be excluded unless parents provide proof of immunizations and/or required immunizations are scheduled to be administered within 15 calendar days. (School Immunization Law, Chapter 76, Section 15 of the General Laws of Massachusetts)

EXEMPTIONS FOR IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Exemptions for religious beliefs and health reasons are allowed by law. The parent/ guardian must submit a written statement that immunization conflicts with their sincere religious beliefs.

A physician's certificate is the only acceptable evidence for exempting a child from immunization for health reasons. This certificate must be submitted at the beginning of each school year to the physician in charge of the School Health Program. Any differences of opinion should be referred to the Department of Public Health whose decision shall be final. M.G.L. c.76 §15.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

The Department of Public Health requires that the public schools have on file a **physical examination upon entrance or transfer into the school system and every 3 or 4 years thereafter**. Your child will need an up-to-date physical on entry to preschool or Kindergarten, dated March or later of the current school year. A physical examination is also required before entry into the fourth grade. Please inform your doctor that the Massachusetts Physician's Physical Form is available upon request from the Health Office. If your child receives yearly physicals, please provide a copy to the health office so their information is up-to-date.

Physicals are also available with the New Bedford Well Child Clinic in New Bedford.

SCREENINGS

The school provides every student with a yearly vision, hearing, weight, and height screening. In addition, in both 1st and 4th grade, we are required to calculate Body Mass Index (BMI). You may opt out of the BMI screening by sending a letter to the school nurse indicating your desire to NOT have your child screened for this. If your child does not meet the standards on these screenings, the school nurse will send a letter home to inform you. You will be requested to have a follow up evaluation done by your physician. Please provide the health department with the documentation of the follow up. These screenings are required by 105 CMR §200.000, 105 CMR 200.900, 105 CMR 200.910, and M.G.L. c.71 §57.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

It is the responsibility of the school nurse to supervise the taking of prescription or over the counter medication by students. The following conditions apply:

1. The school nurse must have a **dated written or verbal order from a licensed prescriber to administer any medication either prescribed or over the counter**.
2. A **Medication Order** form is available upon request from the Health Office. This form should be used whenever receiving an order for medication from a physician.
3. Medication Orders must be renewed as necessary and at the beginning of each school year. 4. A written parent/guardian permission slip is also required. This form, labeled **Authorization for Dispensing Medication**, is also available at the Health Office and should be used when allowing permission for a medication to be dispensed by the school nurse or by school personnel designated by the school nurse.
5. Prescription medication must be in a container labeled by the physician or pharmacist.
6. The medication must be **brought to the school by the parent/guardian (or an adult designated by this person: 18 years old or older)**. Students **are not** allowed to carry medications on their persons **at any time**.
7. Any remaining medication, by the last day of school or following a change in medication, must be picked up from school by the parent/guardian or designated adult. The school nurse will appropriately discard any medication that is not picked up by the last day of school.
8. All medication is stored in a locked cabinet.
9. One other option is for the parent/guardian or designated adult to bring the medication to the school and administer the medication to the student either at the designated time or on an as needed basis.
10. The school nurse must agree to dispense the medication. 11. The school nurse will review all medically- related notes.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

STATE TESTING

The state of Massachusetts requires the administration of certain testing, such as Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). We administer these tests as directed by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, currently in grades 3 and 4. All students are required by law to participate in this testing. Students who do not complete the testing in the time frame allowed by the state cannot make up portions of the test.

DISTRICT TESTING

At AES, there are two district administered assessments. We administer the DIBELS test to students in grades K-4, three times a year. This is a screening test for basic literacy skills. Additionally, grade 2-4 students are administered the Galileo test in mathematics and English language arts.

SUPPLIES & MATERIALS

The school will supply students with the necessary materials to do their work in school. Families are expected to provide backpacks, pencil cases and any other general materials to assist in the learning process. Students are also responsible for materials needed to complete home projects, reports, or other projects which are assigned as part of their classroom curriculum.

LOST OR DAMAGED SCHOOLBOOKS

Examples of school books include: library books, textbooks, and any other book for use in school. Students are expected to be prepared for class by bringing all materials expected of them including books. All textbooks must be covered throughout the year. Students are responsible for the care and protection of each schoolbook issued.

Parents/Guardians of students who damage or lose a schoolbook must pay the school to have it replaced. An administrator will take into consideration the initial cost of the item, condition of the item when issued, and the copyright/purchase date, when determining the cost of repayment. A letter will be sent from the school to any student who has lost or damaged a school textbook or book. Charges for lost or damaged books must be paid in full within 30 days of the mailing of the letter.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an important learning activity which helps students develop their academic skills. It also helps students in the mastery of learning strategies and skills, as well as develops students' personal responsibility for their learning. Homework should increase in complexity with the growing maturity of each student. It should be recognized as a gradual, progressive, and indispensable experience for all students and will be recognized as part of their academic grade.

Each classroom teacher will regularly assign homework in addition to regular independent reading at the student's grade level. Additional assignments, long-term projects, or studying may also be assigned and weekend assignments may be given at the discretion of the teacher. **General grade level guidelines are:** Grade 1: 10-15 minutes nightly Grade 2: 15-20 minutes nightly Grade 3: 25-30 minutes nightly Grade 4: 30-40 minutes nightly

EXTRA HELP/MAKE-UP WORK

Arrangements can be made with teachers for students to receive extra help before or after school. It is the student's responsibility to make up any work that he/she misses due to absence or discipline. Failure to do so could impact student achievement in meeting standards-based criteria. See the make-up work citation located in the general information portion of the handbook regarding make-up work due to an absence and the out of school suspension citation located in the student discipline section of this handbook regarding make-up work due to an out-of-school suspension. Each classroom teacher provides a weekly opportunity for students to receive additional academic help. Please speak to the individual teacher to get specific information regarding the day and time for extra help.

PROGRESS REPORTING SYSTEM- STANDARDS-BASED REPORT CARDS:

This year, the elementary school will issue standards-based report cards three times a year to students in grades K-4. Standards-based report cards are similar to report cards with grades in that they communicate to parents/guardian students' achievement and effort levels. Standards-based report cards are designed to be more descriptive as they report on students' performance levels for critical standards in ELA (reading, writing, spelling), math, science and social studies.

Performance indicators for each trimester, similar to the State's performance levels, are used:

E = Exceeding the grade-level standard expectations

M = Meeting the grade-level standard expectations

PM = Progressing toward meeting the grade-level standard expectations

NM = Not meeting grade-level standard expectations

NA = Not Assessed during that trimester

*= area of strength

√= area of concern

A rating of 4 does not equal or translate to an A+ grade. A rating of 4 shows that a student knows that grade-level standard and is ready to master another standard in that subject or is ready for extending or enriching activities. The process of providing, extending or enriching reaching is referred to as "differentiation." Extending/enriching lessons are designed so that students use higher-thinking skills to apply the grade-level knowledge. For example, students in grade K who can consistently "*fluently add and subtract within 4, including 0*" will be provided a differentiated activity while other students practice the skills for this standard. You will see this practice in small-group centers where teachers and paraprofessionals support intervention and enrichment learning. More information will be provided by your child's classroom teacher and by administrative informational sessions. Effort marks will remain the same: 1-Excellent; 2-Good; 3-Fair; 4-Poor

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Please see the district calendar for dates and times.

STUDENT RECOGNITION

Two (2) students from each classroom will be recognized at the end of each term by receiving the Principal's Award. This award will be given to students who have shown tremendous effort, leadership, or personal academic progress during the term.

At the end of the school year, one student from each grade will also be recognized with the PRIDE award. This award will recognize a student's exceptional leadership, pride, and sense of community.

P = Positive attitude

R = Respectful of peers & staff

I = Initiative to do well

D = Dependable

E = Enthusiastic

STUDENTS AT RISK

It is the policy of the Acushnet Public Schools and Acushnet Elementary School to provide an optimum educational environment for all students and to identify a student's educational difficulties/problems as close to their inception as is possible.

At various times during a school year, a student may require special assistance in order to achieve his/her fullest potential. To achieve this goal, the following procedure has been developed:

Any parent/guardian, teacher or other professional staff member may inquire about scheduling a parent/guardian-teacher conference. Please contact the individual classroom teacher to make an appointment for individual conferences. It is suggested that a referral and/or appointment of this type be made for:

- *Any student who is in danger of failing a major subject.
- *Any student who is experiencing a wide disparity between their ability and actual performance.
- *Any student who is demonstrating chronic behavior problems.
- *Any student whose behavior is out of the ordinary, based on that student's personal history.

STUDENT TEACHER ASSISTANCE TEAM

The Student Teacher Assistance Team, (STAT), which is a function of general education, enables staff members to meet as a team to address the individual needs of students. Classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators explore program options and instructional accommodations within regular programming to help address the student's need.

STUDENT PROMOTION

Classroom determination for the upcoming school year is determined by teachers and administration with the final decision resting with the principal. These decisions are made by taking into consideration the strengths and academic needs of each individual student.

RETENTION POLICY

Report cards, grades, and parent conferences should reflect the academic difficulties of a student considered for retention. When a student is experiencing difficulty developmentally or academically the following procedure will take place:

1. During and/or at the end of the first marking period the teacher will arrange a conference with the child's parents to explain the student's strengths and weaknesses that they have observed.
2. At the end of the second marking period, the teacher will arrange a conference with the parents to inform them of the possibility of retention. At this conference, the principal, Title I, or other support personnel may be asked to participate.
3. Before the end of the third marking period, a conference will be arranged with the parents. At this time the teacher will update the parents about the progress of the student. If it is deemed necessary, the principal will be involved in the conference. The principal should be notified if the parents are not in agreement with the recommendation of retention.

4. If the teacher and the principal agree that the student is to be retained, the parents shall be notified before June 1. A letter from the principal recommending retention will be sent no later than June 14 and will be filed in the student's permanent record folder at the close of the school year.

HEALTH CURRICULUM

In the event that there are issues covered within the curriculum which deal with human sexuality, parents will be notified before the unit of study is begun.

Each such notice to parents/guardians will include a brief description of the curriculum covered by this policy, and will inform parents/guardians that they may:

1. Exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues, without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the school principal requesting an exemption. The request must state the particular conflict involved, i.e. religion. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian under this policy may be given an alternative assignment.

2. Inspect and review program instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians and others to the extent practicable. Parents/guardians may arrange with the principal to review the materials at the school and may also review them at other locations that may be determined by the superintendent of schools.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with a decision of the principal concerning notice, access to instructional materials, or exemption for the student under this policy may send a written request to the superintendent for review of the issue. The superintendent or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within two weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the superintendent's decision may send a written request to the school committee for review of the issue. The school committee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within four weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is still dissatisfied after this process may send a written request to the Commissioner of Education for review of the issue in dispute.

We strongly recommend that all students participate fully in our health classes, and we encourage parental communication and respect family values. Should you have concerns or questions, please contact the administration.

SPECIAL EDUCATION/504

SECTION 504

Section 504 is a federal statute that prohibits a qualified individual with a disability from being excluded in the participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance because of his/her disability.

The Acushnet Elementary School 504 Coordinator is Ms. Kim Bettencourt.

If you believe in good faith that you have been subject to discrimination based on disability, you may file a grievance with the District.

Please see the District's Non-Discrimination Policy and Grievance Procedure at the end of this handbook or on the District website (www.acushnetschools.us) for more detailed information regarding the grievance process.

If you have any questions regarding Section 504, please direct your inquiries to your child's principal (see contact information, school website).

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education is provided to eligible students in Massachusetts in accordance with state and federal law including M.G.L. c.71B, 603 CMR §28.00, 20 USC §1400 and 34 CFR §300.000 et seq. These laws compel schools to provide a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment to students who, because of a disability, are unable to progress effectively and who require specially designed instruction in order to access the curriculum.

If a parent/guardian, teacher, other educational personnel, or any student eighteen years of age or older, suspect that the student has a disability that may require special education and/or related services to allow him/her to make effective progress in the school, that individual may refer the student for an evaluation pursuant to 603 CMR Section 28.04.

OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Pursuant to M.G.L. c.71B &3, upon request by a parent, the school will provide timely access to parents and parent-designated independent evaluators and educational consultants for observations of a child's current or proposed special education program, including both academic and non-academic components of any such program.

The district's policy for such observations, including the steps to follow in requesting such an observation, is available at www.acushnetschools.us or at the main office of the school.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Please see the Acushnet School Committee's policy on [non-discrimination](#).

AES STUDENT BEHAVIORS

PBIS OVERVIEW







AES has been utilizing the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) since 2012-2013. The goal of PBIS is to ensure students are able to learn in a safe, collaborative environment which focuses on recognizing positive behaviors demonstrated by students. PBIS is school- wide, classroom, and individual systems of support. Students are explicitly taught behavioral expectations and then recognized for demonstrating appropriate, positive behaviors.

We are committed to maintaining positive school and classroom behaviors with minimal disruptions so that all students can learn. AES PBIS has clearly defined outcomes, research-validated practices, supportive administrative systems, and information for problem- solving behaviors.

All staff members have established regular, predictable positive learning and teaching environments. Consistent behavior expectations are reinforced in the cafeteria, hallways, bathrooms, and assemblies. Students are recognized by receiving CAT Coins (Caught Acting Terrifically) and receive school-wide rewards.

At AES, it is our belief that every effort should be made to recognize the positive behaviors exhibited by our students. The AES Student Behaviors' matrix, on the next page, explains the behaviors all students are expected to maintain.

Please see the Behavior Chart on the following page.

	Classroom/All Settings 	Playground 	Cafeteria 	Hallway 	Bathroom 	Bus 
S A F E	I will: *keep hands and feet to self *sit in chair safely *keep personal space	I will: *use equipment the right way *stay in a play area *keep hands and feet to myself *keep rocks, sticks, and snow on the ground	I will: *use my own money and eat my own food *stay seated until I have permission to get up *always walk *sign out for the bathroom or nurse	I will: *face forward and stay to the right WALKING in a line *keep hands by my side *let adults open outside doors	I will: *always flush the toilet *wash hands with soap *keep feet on the floor	I will: *stay seated in my personal space *keep my hands and feet to myself
R E S P O N S I B L E	I will: *do quality work in a timely manner *keep my desk, cubby, and classroom clean *be a problem solver *use time effectively *make good choices *accept consequences	I will: *line up quickly and quietly *return equipment *tell an adult if I see an unsafe choice *follow the rules of the games	I will: *have a calm body and quiet voice in line *keep my area clean *get everything I need before I sit down	I will: *go to where I belong and right back to class	I will: *keep bathroom clean *return to class quickly and quietly *report problems to a teacher	I will: *keep my belongings near me *listen to adults speaking *help keep the bus clean
R E S P E C T F U L	I will: *keep eyes and ears on speaker *work cooperatively *be kind and considerate *ask permission appropriately *raise hand to speak and wait for speaker to finish *use the appropriate voice level (0, 1, 2)	I will: *use kind words *show good sportsmanship *include others, share, and take turns *use the appropriate voice level (0, 1, 2)	I will: *use good manners and kind manners *raise my hand if I have to get up *use voice level 1 *use voice level 0 during silent time	I will: *keep personal space *respect artwork in the hallways *remove hats and hoods when entering the building *use voice level 0	I will: *respect other's privacy *wait my turn *use voice level 1	I will: *use kind words and be patient *use voice level 1
Voice Level 0 = Silent Voice Voice Level 1 = Whisper (6" Voice) Voice Level 2 = Normal Voice Voice Level 3 = Outside Voice						

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Students will at times make poor choices in the conference with the student to an expulsion, depending on the classroom or other areas of the school building. At such times, the behaviors will be classified as either minor or major infractions (see chart).

CONSEQUENCES FOR SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS

Minor Infractions will typically be handled by the classroom teacher or on-duty teacher or paraprofessional. Possible consequences may include, but are not limited to, a verbal/non-verbal reminder, change of seat, review of rules, or verbal apology/peer discussion.

Continuous Minor Infractions are at such times that a behavior continues or is of a more serious nature. At this time, the student will have consequences that can range from loss of privilege by classroom/on-duty teacher or paraprofessional, referral to the guidance counselor (check-in/check-out) for discussion with student, de-escalation time, and/or contact with a parent/guardian.

Major Infractions or Habitual Minor Infractions will result in more serious consequences. At this time, students will be referred to administration. Consequences may range from lunch detention, after-school detention, removal of class for a period of time, in-school suspension, or out of school suspension.

Student discipline shall be addressed on an individual basis with each student,. Although this handbook describes possible consequences for violations of school rules, at the discretion of the school administration, all penalties for violating the school rules listed may be increased or decreased depending on the severity of the violation and other circumstances.

Individual student discipline will only be discussed with the family/guardians of the child directly involved. No information regarding students or their discipline will be given to anyone who is not a parent or guardian of that child.

If the disciplinary procedures herein have been implemented and have been unsuccessful in changing the behavior of a student, the parents/guardians will be contacted by the administration and may be asked to come into school to meet with their child's team of teachers and/or the administration. A specific behavior plan may be developed to assist the student in making appropriate school choices. Excessive and repetitive violations of school rules may result in the school filing a Child Requiring Assistance ("The Act") Petition with the Bristol County Juvenile Courts.

All cases of assault/ fighting will be referred to the office for administrative discipline.

EXPLANATIONS OF MAJOR CONSEQUENCES

SUSPENSIONS/EXPULSIONS: The Acushnet Public Schools adheres to the Student Discipline Laws and Regulations as set forth in [Massachusetts General Laws](#) Chapter 71, § 37H, 37H 1/2 and 37H 3/4 and 603 CMR 53.00 et seq. "Disciplinary offense under G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H1/2 " means one or more of the following alleged or determined disciplinary infractions: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; and d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H1/2.

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS- STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The purpose of 603 CMR 53.00 is:

- (a) for those discipline offenses subject to G.L. 71, § 37H3/4, as set forth in 603 CMR 53.01(3)(a), to limit the use of long-term suspension as a consequence for student misconduct until other consequences have been considered and tried as appropriate;
- (b) to promote engagement of a student's parent in discussion of the student's misconduct, and options for responding to it;
- (c) to assure that every student who is expelled or suspended, regardless of the reason for suspension or expulsion, has the opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of suspension or expulsion; and,
- (d) to keep schools safe and supportive for all students while ensuring fair and effective disciplinary practices.

In-school Suspension: means removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. In-school suspension for ten (10) days or less, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, shall not be considered a short-term suspension under these regulations. If a student is placed in in-school suspension for more than ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, such suspension shall be deemed a long-term suspension for due process, appeal, and reporting purposes under 603 CMR 53.00.

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

Long-term Suspension: means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. A principal may, in his or her discretion, allow a student to serve a long-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense set forth in subsections (a) or (b) of G.L. c. 71, §37 H, or in section 37H 1/2 of G.L. c. 71, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety (90) school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

Expulsion: means the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H1/2 for: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H1/2.

Investigation of Disciplinary Incidents: Nothing in these regulations shall prevent a school administrator from conducting an investigation, including student interviews, of a school-related disciplinary incident.

Alternatives to Suspension under Section 37H3/4: In every case of student misconduct for which

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

Notice of Suspension and Hearing under Section §37H3/4: (1) Except as provided in 603 CMR 53.07 and 603 CMR 53.10, a principal may not impose a suspension as a consequence for a disciplinary offense without first providing the student and the parent oral and written notice, and providing the student an opportunity for a hearing on the charge and the parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing. (2) The principal shall provide oral and written notice to the student and the parent in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall set forth in plain language:

- (a) the disciplinary offense;
- (b) the basis for the charge;
- (c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- (d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing;
- (e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- (f) the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;
- (g) if the student may be placed on long-term suspension following the hearing with the principal:
 - 1. the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08 (3)(b); and
 - 2. the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.

(3) The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct a hearing without the parent present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The principal is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

(4) Written notice to the parent may be made by hand delivery, first-class mail, certified mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and parent.

Emergency Removal under Section 37H3/4: Nothing in these regulations shall prevent a principal from removing a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The principal shall immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall:

- (a) Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and the other matters set forth in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- (b) Provide written notice to the student and parent as provided in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- (c) Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the principal that complies with 603 CMR 53.08(2) or 53.08(3), as applicable, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is

otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent.

(d) Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(2)(c) and 53.08(2)(d) or 603 CMR 53.08(3)(c) and 53.08(3)(d), as applicable.

(2) A principal may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

The principal may remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on the student's misconduct. Such a removal is not subject to the procedures in G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4 or 603 CMR 53.00.

Principal's Hearing under Section 37H3/4: (1) The principal shall determine the extent of the rights to be afforded the student at a disciplinary hearing based on the anticipated consequences for the disciplinary offense. If the consequence may be long-term suspension from school, the principal shall afford the student, at a minimum, all the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08(3) in addition to those rights afforded to students who may face a short-term suspension from school.

(2) Principal Hearing - Short-term Suspension

(a) The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction. At a minimum, the principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as set forth in 603 CMR 53.05. The principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

(b) Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.

(c) The principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as provided in 603 CMR 53.13(1). The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

(d) If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

(3) Principal Hearing - Long-term Suspension

(a) The purpose of the hearing is the same as the purpose of a short-term suspension hearing.

(b) At a minimum, in addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following rights:

1. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
2. The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense;

3. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so;
 4. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
 5. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.
- (c) The principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- (d) Based on the evidence, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension as set forth in 603 CMR 53.05, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent. If the principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:
1. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
 2. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
 3. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
 4. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as provided in 603 CMR 53.13(4)(a);
 5. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or designee, but only if the principal has imposed a long-term suspension. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language:
 - a) the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that
 - b) the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.
- (e) If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

Superintendent's Hearing under Section 37H34: (1) A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.

- (2) The student or parent shall file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within the time period set forth 603 CMR 53.08 (3) (c) 5.a). If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

- (3) The superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the superintendent shall grant the extension.
- (4) The superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and superintendent to participate. The superintendent shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- (5) The superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent upon request. The superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon *request*.
- (6) The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension under 603 CMR 53.08(3)(b).
- (7) The superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(3)(c)1 through 5. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision.
- (8) The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district, charter school, or virtual school, with regard to the suspension.

Disciplinary Offenses under Section 37H or 37H1/2: (1) School districts shall adopt disciplinary policies and procedures applicable to a student who is accused of a disciplinary offense under G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H- 1/2. Such policies and procedures shall be consistent with the applicable statute and provide due process of law.

- (2) The principal may remove a student who has committed a disciplinary offense under G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H1/2 from school for more than ninety (90) days in a school year.
- (3) Any student who is removed from school for a disciplinary offense under G.L. c. 71, §37H or §37H1/2 shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress during the period of removal, as provided in 603 CMR 53.13.

Education Services and Academic Progress under Sections 37H, 37H1/2, and 37H3/4: (1) Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. The principal shall inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

- (2) Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.
- (3) The principal shall develop a school-wide education service plan describing the education services that the school district will make available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. The plan shall include the process for notifying such students and their parents of the services and arranging such services. Education services shall be based on, and be provided in a manner consistent with, the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under G.L. c 69, §§ 1D and 1F.

(4) Notice of Education Services for Students in Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion; Enrollment Reporting.

(a) The principal shall notify the parent and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or placed on long-term suspension. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information.

(b) For each student expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in- school or out-of-school, the school district shall document the student's enrollment in education services. For data reporting purposes, the school shall track and report attendance, academic progress, and such other data as directed by the Department.

WEAPONS, DRUGS AND ASSAULT ON STAFF: In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §37H:

a. Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

b. Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

c. Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

d. Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his/ her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

e. When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

In addition, any school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time.

Students should not bring in any toy or other object which resembles a weapon, knife, or gun of any kind. Objects of this nature will be confiscated and may result in the student being referred to the principal for further action, depending on the individual situation.

FELONY CHARGES AND CONVICTIONS: In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71 §37H 1/2:

Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen of chapter seventy-six:

(1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a

felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

(2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such student.

In accordance with M.G.L. c.76 §17 a school committee may permanently expel a student but not without first giving the student and his/her parent or guardian an opportunity to be heard.

DISCIPLINE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS: The disciplining of students with disabilities is governed by federal and state special education law and the regulations promulgated there under. These laws include the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1400, *et seq.*; 34 CFR Section 300.000 *et seq.*, and Massachusetts General Laws, c. 71B.

Students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are expected to abide by the same rules as non-disabled students. Anytime school personnel seek to remove a student from his or her current educational placement for more than ten school days in a school year, this constitutes a "change in placement." A

change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under the IDEA, the federal special education law. When decision is made for a change in placement, the student's IEP Team must reconvene for a "Manifestation Determination" to determine:

1. if the conduct in question was "caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability"; or
2. if the conduct in question was the "direct result of the local school's failure to implement the IEP." If the IEP Team concludes that the student's misconduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the district may discipline the student in accordance with this student handbook.

However, the district must continue to provide the student with educational services during the period of exclusion, if the exclusion goes beyond a total of ten days in any given school year. If it is determined that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school will arrange for a functional behavioral assessment (if one has not been conducted on the student) and the development or modification of a behavior intervention plan and the student will return to his/her current placement, unless the district and the parent agree to a change in placement. If a parent disagrees with the Team's manifestation determination or with the Team's decision regarding the placement of a student, the parent may request a hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA).

School personnel may remove a special education student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days if a student without regard to whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability if the student: (1) carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises or at a school function; (2) knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school functions; or (3) inflicts serious bodily injury upon another person at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function.

Additionally, a Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals Hearing Officer, under certain circumstances, may order a change in the placement of a student eligible for Special Education to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days.

For more details on these procedures, please contact the special education department.

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH SECTION 504 PLANS: Students with Section 504 plans are expected to meet the expectations for behavior identified in this handbook. A student on a Section 504 plan may be disciplined like any other non-disabled student. However, if the student is going to be suspended for ten (10) or more consecutive days, expelled or suspended for more than fifteen (15) cumulative days (and there is a change in placement as a result), then a manifestation determination review shall be conducted. The student's 504 team shall convene, and answer two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:

1. Is the misconduct the result of failure to implement the student's 504 plan?
2. Is the misconduct caused by, or does it have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability?

A summary of the manifestation determination review will be written and a copy provided to the Parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible after the review, but no later than five (5) school days after the review.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT (INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT)

The Acushnet Public Schools has a commitment to maintaining an educational environment where bigotry and intolerance, including discrimination such as harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, or age, are not tolerated.

Discrimination, including harassment, is contrary to the mission of the Acushnet Public Schools and its

commitment to equal opportunity in education.

The Acushnet Public Schools does not tolerate discrimination or harassment. All students found to have violated the district's Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy may be subject to discipline up to and including suspension and (in some rare cases) expulsion. For more information regarding the district Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedure, please see the district policy in the appendix of this handbook.

No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.

If you believe in good faith that you have been subject to discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, you may file a grievance with the District.

Please see the District's Non-Discrimination Policy and Grievance Procedure at the end of this handbook or on the district website (www.acushnetschools.us) for more detailed information regarding the grievance process.

HAZING: MGL, Chapter 269, Sections 17-19, makes it a crime to participate in organized hazing and provides for a punishment of a fine, imprisonment or both. In accordance with the laws of the State of Massachusetts, Acushnet Elementary School does not condone hazing in any activity associated with the school, including athletics, academics and co-curricular clubs and organizations.

TRUANCY: By law, students are required to attend school daily. The following will be classified as truancy: 1) Students absent from school in violation of the law 2) Students who leave the school without proper authorization. Students classified as truant will be required to make up missed work. In addition, written notification will be forwarded to the attendance officer documenting the truancy.

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

The Acushnet Public Schools expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. The Acushnet Public Schools is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities.

All incidents of bullying and cyberbullying must be reported to the school administration for investigation and proper determination of intent and appropriate penalty. This may be done by any individual at any time, either orally or in written form, to any member of the school staff. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form is available at the main office. This may also be reported by email to: susanbeck@acushnetschool.us, by phone at 508- 998-0255, ext. 2388, or by mail at Acushnet Elementary School 800 Middle Road Attention: School Administration Acushnet, MA 02743.

Once reported, all incidents are promptly investigated. Prompt action will be taken to end bullying behavior and to restore the target's sense of safety. In addition, retaliation of any kind will be dealt with strongly. Discipline will be consistent with the school code of conduct (beginning on page 23 of this handbook).

Definitions *Aggressor* is a student or staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students or staff of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; (ii) places the target in

reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying includes cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

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

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is directed.

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

[Please also see the Acushnet Public School's Bullying Prevention Plan.](#)

ACUSHNET SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICIES

APPENDIX A – DISTRICT POLICIES

Please be advised that the District Civil Rights Coordinator for Title VI (race, color, national origin); Title IX (sex); Section 504 (disability); Title II of the ADA(disability); Religion, Sexual Orientation and Age is the Director of Student Services- Ms. Kim Bettencourt, 708 Middle Road Acushnet, MA (508) 998-0258. However, for additional contacts please consult the Non-discrimination and harassment policy and grievance procedure below:

AC

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA, Age Discrimination Act M.G.L. c. 76 §5, M.G.L. c.151C, 603 C.M.R. §26.08

I. Introduction

The Acushnet Public Schools has a commitment to maintaining an educational environment where bigotry and intolerance, including discrimination such as harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age, are not tolerated. Discrimination, including harassment, is contrary to the mission of the Acushnet Public Schools and its commitment to equal opportunity in education.

The Acushnet Public Schools does not discriminate against students, parents, employees or the general public. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to the Acushnet Public Schools, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of the Acushnet Public Schools on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation (M.G.L. c. 76 §5). Additionally, the Acushnet Public Schools does not tolerate harassment based upon race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation (603 CMR 26.08).

For purposes of this policy and procedure, "school" includes school-sponsored events, trips, sports events, similar events connected with school or employment. Any retaliation against an individual who has complained about discrimination, including harassment, or any retaliation against any individual who has cooperated with an investigation of a discrimination, harassment or retaliation complaint, is also unlawful and will not be tolerated.

The Acushnet Public Schools takes allegations of discrimination, including harassment, seriously and will respond promptly to complaints. Where it is determined that conduct that violates the law and this policy has occurred, the Acushnet Public Schools will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and will impose corrective action as necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

II. Definition of Discrimination and Harassment

"Discrimination" includes conduct that excludes a person from participation in, denies an individual the benefits of, or otherwise subjects an individual to different treatment on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, or disability. Harassing conduct involving these bases can be a form of discrimination.

"Harassment" is defined as unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on:

race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age. Harassment is prohibited by the Acushnet Public Schools, and violates the law.

Examples of harassment include:

- Display or circulation of written materials or pictures that are degrading to a person or group based upon the criteria listed above.
- Verbal abuse or insults about, directed at, or made in the presence of an individual or group described above because of one of the criteria listed above.
- Any action or speech that contributes to, promotes or results in a hostile or discriminatory environment to an individual or group described above.
- Any action or speech that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent that it either (i) interferes with or limits the ability of an individual or group (as described above) to participate in or benefit from a school program or activity of the Acushnet Public Schools; or (ii) creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.

Many forms of harassment have been recognized as violations of the civil rights laws (including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the ADA, Title VI, Title IX and state statutes like M.G.L. 151C) by federal courts, state courts, the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

"Sexual harassment" is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to or rejection of such advances, requests, or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of employment, academic standing, school-related opportunities, or as a basis for employment decisions.
- Such advances, requests, or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or sexually offensive work or educational environment.

While it is not possible to list all circumstances that may be considered sexual harassment, the following are examples of conduct that violate the law and policy and which, if severe and pervasive, constitute sexual harassment. In each case, such a determination will depend upon the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, whether they involve physical touching or not.
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments.
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or verbal references to sexual conduct, comments about an individual's body, comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess.
- Discussions of one's own sexual activities or inquiries into others' sexual experiences.
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons.

The definitions of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment are broad. In addition to the above examples, other unwelcome conduct, whether intended or not, that has the effect of creating a school environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating may constitute discrimination, harassment and/or sexual harassment.

III. Grievance Procedure: Reporting Complaints of Discrimination and Harassment

a. Introduction

If any Acushnet Public Schools student, parent or employee believes, in good faith, that he or she

has been subjected to sexual harassment or any other form of harassment or discrimination described above, the individual has a right to file a complaint with the Acushnet Public Schools. This may be done informally or formally, as described below.

Teachers or staff members who observe or receive reports of incidents of harassment or discrimination involving students shall report such incidents immediately to the student's principal. Teachers or staff members aware of harassment or discrimination involving any employee shall report such incidents to the Principal or District Civil Rights Coordinator listed below.

Please note that while these procedures relate to the Acushnet Public Schools' policy of promoting an educational setting free from discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, as detailed further in this policy, these procedures are not designed nor intended to limit the Acushnet Public Schools' authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which the Acushnet Public Schools deems unacceptable.

b. Grievance Procedures

i. Contacts

District Civil Rights Coordinator for Title VI (race, color, national origin); Title IX (sex); Section 504 (disability); Title II of the ADA (disability); Religion, Sexual Orientation and Age is the Special Education Director- 800 Middle Road Acushnet, MA (508) 998-0258.

Acushnet Elementary School Principal- 800 Middle Road Acushnet, MA (508) 998-0255.

Albert F. Ford Middle School Principal- 708 Middle Road Acushnet, MA (508) 998-0265.

Students, parents or employees who wish to initiate the formal complaint process may put their complaint in writing to the building Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. Any Principal receiving such a complaint shall immediately forward the complaint to the Civil Rights Coordinator listed above, who will then begin the formal procedure described below.

Any teacher or other employee who receives a formal complaint of discrimination or harassment shall immediately forward the complaint to the building Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. Any Principal receiving such a complaint shall immediately forward the complaint to the Civil Rights Coordinator listed above, who will begin the formal procedure described below.

The Civil Rights Coordinator shall handle the investigation of a formal complaint, unless the Superintendent chooses to investigate the complaint or designates another person to investigate it on his/her behalf. Any complaint about an employee who holds a supervisory position shall be investigated by a person who is not subject to that supervisor's authority. Any complaint about the Superintendent should be submitted to the chairperson of the school board, who should consult with legal counsel concerning the handling and investigation of the complaint.

ii. Disciplinary Action

If it is determined that harassment or discrimination has occurred by a student or employee, then disciplinary action may be taken appropriate to the circumstances regardless if it is handled through the informal or formal resolution process. Such action may include consequences up to and including termination of employment for staff and up to and including suspension or expulsion for students.

iii. Internal Grievance Procedure

1. Informal Resolution of Discrimination and Harassment Complaints

Before initiating the formal procedure, the student/parent/employee may wish, if possible, to resolve the complaint on an informal basis through discussion.

A student or parent can discuss the issue with the building Principal. An employee can discuss the issue with his/her immediate supervisor or the building Principal. The person receiving the complaint shall attempt, within his/her authority, to work with the individual to resolve the issue fairly and expeditiously within ten (10) working days of receiving the complaint. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution from the informal process, or if he/she does not choose informal resolution, then he/she can begin the formal complaint procedure described below.¹ Any resolution or disciplinary action taken by a Principal as a result of an investigation or discussion during the informal resolution process should be put to writing and forwarded to the District Civil Rights Coordinator.

2. Formal Resolution of Discrimination and Harassment Concerns:

A student, parent or employee who is not satisfied with the informal resolution process or who chooses not to participate in the informal resolution process may initiate the formal complaint procedure at any time by putting the complaint in writing to the Principal or District Civil Rights Coordinator. An employee, at the request of the student, may put the complaint in writing for the student. Principals who receive written formal complaints should immediately forward the complaint to the District Civil Rights Coordinator.

a. What the complaint should include

The student/parent/employee's written complaint should include: the name of the individual making the complaint, the name of the individual aggrieved, the name of the individual(s) accused of committing the harassing or discriminatory practice, the location of the school/department where the alleged discriminatory practice occurred, the basis for the complaint, witnesses (if any) and the corrective action the student is seeking. If the written complaint does not contain this information, the Principal or District Civil Rights Coordinator will ask the complainant for this information.

b. When to file a complaint

Efforts should be made to file such complaint within twenty (20) calendar days after the alleged discriminatory practice occurred in order for an expeditious investigation to be conducted, unless extenuating circumstances exist. However, the Acushnet Public Schools will investigate any complaint no matter when it is filed.

¹ Informal resolution may not be appropriate in all cases, including but not limited to more severe or egregious allegations of discrimination or harassment

c. What will happen after the complaint is filed

Promptly after receiving the complaint, the District Civil Rights Coordinator or designee, as permitted pursuant to Section III(B)(i) of this section) will conduct the necessary investigation, including making good faith efforts to gather all relevant evidence for consideration. In the course of his/her investigation, the District Civil Rights Coordinator or designee shall contact those individuals that have been referred to as having pertinent information related to the complaint. This process shall include, at a minimum, contacting the complainant; and the person against whom the complaint was filed and/or the appropriate authority involved; interviewing witnesses; and considering relevant documentation. During this process, complainants will have the opportunity to present witnesses and other relevant evidence to the District Civil Rights Coordinator or designee conducting the investigation.

The District Coordinator or designee should use appropriate interim measures during the investigation of a complaint to ensure that the student is free from discrimination and/or harassment during the pending investigation.

Barring extenuating circumstances, the District Coordinator or designee, will complete the investigation as soon as practicable and normally not later than thirty (30) working days. When more than thirty (30) working days is required for the investigation, the District Civil Rights Coordinator or designee shall inform the complainant that the investigation is still ongoing.

After completing the formal investigation of the complaint, the District Civil Rights Coordinator or designee shall make a decision on the complaint and shall inform the complainant and the person(s) against whom the complaint was made, of the results of the investigation in writing. In the case of a student who is found to have violated this policy, the District Civil Rights Coordinator or designee will take appropriate action. In the case of an employee who is found to have violated this policy, the District Civil Rights Coordinator or designee will refer the matter to the Principal or Superintendent for appropriate action.

d. What you can do if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint procedure

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, he/she can appeal this finding to the Superintendent within five working days.

The Superintendent will review the information considered by the District Civil Rights Coordinator or designee, collect any additional information he/she believes is necessary to make an informed decision and shall issue a written decision to the complainant and the person against whom the complaint was made. Again, strict timelines cannot be set for conducting the investigation because each set of circumstances is different. However, the Superintendent will make sure that the complaint is handled as quickly as feasible and will strive to complete the investigation within ten (10) working days.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Superintendent's decision, or if he/she does not choose either of the internal resolution processes, he/she may follow the external grievance procedure described below.

Contact information for the Superintendent is:

Superintendent of Schools- 708 Middle Road, Acushnet, MA 02743 (508) 998-0260

iii. External Grievance Procedure

Any student, parent or employee who chooses not to use the district's internal grievance procedures or who is not satisfied with the district's internal grievance procedures may file a complaint of discrimination or harassment with an appropriate state or federal agency.

1. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of students:

The Office for Civil Rights US Department of Education 8th Floor 5 Post Office Square, Suite 900 Boston, MA 02109-3921 Telephone: 617-289-0111 FAX: 617-289-0150 TDD: 877-521-2172

OR

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination
One Ashburton Place Sixth Floor, Room 601 Boston,
MA 02108 Phone: 617-994-6000 TTY: 617-994-6196

2. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of parents:

The Office for Civil Rights US Department of Education
8th Floor 5 Post Office Square, Suite 900 Boston, MA
02109-3921 Telephone: 617-289-0111 FAX:
617-289-0150 TDD: 877-521-2172

3. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of employees:

The Office for Civil Rights US
Department of Education 8th Floor 5
Post Office Square, Suite 900 Boston,
MA 02109-3921 Telephone:
617-289-0111 FAX: 617-289-0150
TDD: 877-521-2172

OR

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination One Ashburton Place
Sixth Floor, Room 601
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 617-994-6000
TTY: 617-994-6196

OR

The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission
John F. Kennedy Federal Building 475
Government Center Boston, MA 02203 Phone:
1-800-669-4000

IV. General Policies

1. No reprisals or retaliation shall be invoked against any person for processing, in good faith, a complaint, either on an informal basis or formal basis, or for participating in any way in these complaint procedures.
2. No reprisals or retaliation shall be invoked against any person who, in good faith, has testified, assisted or participated in any manner in any investigations, proceeding, or hearing of a complaint or for otherwise participating in any way in these complaint procedures.
3. Whenever possible, a conference should be scheduled during a time that does not conflict with regularly scheduled work and/or school programs.
4. The Acushnet Public Schools will work with an individual who files a complaint of discrimination or harassment; including conducting an investigation and holding conferences, in order to fairly and expeditiously resolve the complaint.

LEGAL REFS: Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA, Age Discrimination Act, M.G.L. c. 76 §5,
M.G.L. c.151C, 603 C.M.R. §26.08

CROSS REFS: GBAA EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY; JB EQUAL EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES; JICFB BULLYING; JFCF HAZING

Adopted: 8/17/10

Revised: 12/4/12

ACUSHNET PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

APPENDIX B

STUDENT AND PARENT FORMS TO SIGN AND RETURN

Forms to be returned are as follows:

- ★ Emergency Contact Update with either-all students-(This will be sent home with your child on their first day of school.)
 - § Box in upper right right checked off indicating, “If all is correct, check here”
 - § One line (preferably in different color ink or highlighted) through incorrect information and correct information printed neatly on form.
- ★ [Medical Emergency Form](#)-all students- (A paper copy will be sent home with all students on the first day.)

Forms to be completed online are as follows:

- ★ [Photography/Video/Media Consent](#) (Google Form)
- ★ [Parent Sign-off Form](#)- (Google Form) indicates that you and your child have read the rules, regulations, and policies (including the [Acceptable Use Policy](#)) that pertain to the Acushnet Elementary School and that you and your child agree to abide by the regulations and policies set forth herein.

Optional Forms:

- ★ [Volunteer Application](#) - (Optional - Complete this application if you are interested in becoming a volunteer)
- ★ [School Council Nomination Form](#) (Optional - Complete this nomination form if you would like to be a candidate for AES School Council)

Please note the following forms are on file in our main office for all students. If you need to update or change information, please contact the main office.

- ★ Student Transportation Form
- ★ Student Acceptable Use Policy
- ★ Photograph/Video/Media Consent Form

Se você gostaria deste manual em uma língua alternativa, por favor observe isto em baixo:

Si le gustara esta guía en una lengua alterna, por favor note este abajo:

☐ Eu gostaria deste manual em português.

☐ Me gustaría esta guía en español.