

**WELCOME**

**TO**



## **Student/Parent Handbook 2021-2022**

The Pioneer Valley Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, pregnancy-related condition, housing status, or disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment in its programs and activities.

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# Northfield Elementary School

**104 Main Street**  
**Northfield, MA 01360**

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Principal  
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Phone (413) 498-5842  
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Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

With the teachers and staff, I welcome you to the Pioneer Valley Regional School District and to Northfield Elementary School.

In an effort to start your time with us on a positive supportive footing, this handbook has been prepared for you. This Student/Parent Handbook has been designed to acquaint you with the philosophy, goals, and procedures of the Northfield Elementary School community as well as some of the relevant district policies. We ask that you take time to familiarize yourself and your child with these guidelines and important information.

Northfield Elementary School is committed to building within each student a strong educational foundation and successfully preparing them to meet challenges of the future. Our goal is to help each student grow in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits. Teachers encourage initiative, individual and group responsibility, critical thinking and creativity. We expect that all students will develop a strong sense of community. They will feel membership in the community of their classrooms, their school, and their town.

It is our intention to work closely with all children and parents/guardians in order to ensure that all students achieve their personal best. We have high expectations for all students and hope that each child will leave this school with an excitement for learning and a motivation to excel. Please do not hesitate to contact me concerning how you might become more involved in your child's experience at Northfield Elementary School.

Sincerely,

Megan Desmarais  
Principal

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## ***VISION***

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Our vision at Northfield Elementary School is to introduce our students to the life-long pursuit of knowledge in a caring, safe, and challenging environment which is responsive to children's learning abilities and needs and which encourages students to reach their fullest potential.

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## ***MISSION***

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To achieve this vision, our mission at Northfield Elementary School is:

- to introduce children to a developmentally appropriate and comprehensive curriculum that includes experiences for academic, social, physical, and emotional growth and that is sensitive to the changing needs of society;
- to build a solid foundation for students to become lifelong learners by fostering natural curiosity and developing positive attitudes;
- to provide for each child multi-faceted experiences encompassing effective communication, critical thinking, creative and cooperative problem solving, independence, responsibility, self-esteem and discipline, accountability, and socialization skills;
- to encourage acceptance and respect for the differences that exist within our school community and an appreciation for cultural and learning diversity in our own society and throughout the world;
- to develop creativity and nurture aesthetic appreciation through curriculum and class exposures to art, music, literature and theater;
- to maintain a safe, secure physical, social, and emotional environment that encourages risk-taking and ensures that maximum benefits for learning take place;
- and, to involve parents and the community at large in as many aspects of the school as possible.

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## **COMMUNITY PROFILE**

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Northfield is a rural New England community nestled in the northern Connecticut River Valley of Western Massachusetts. It is the only town in Massachusetts that borders both New Hampshire and Vermont, and the only community which is bisected by the Connecticut River.

Northfield is located in the center of the Tri State region, with Greenfield, the county seat, fifteen minutes to the southwest, Athol twenty-five minutes to the southeast, and the communities of Brattleboro, Vermont twenty minutes to the northwest and Keene, New Hampshire twenty-five minutes to the northeast.

Pioneer Valley Regional School District serves the towns of Bernardston, Leyden, Northfield, and Warwick. There are two schools in town: Northfield Elementary School and Pioneer Valley Regional School. There are three schools in our district: Bernardston Elementary, Northfield Elementary, and Pioneer Valley Regional School.

### **2020-2021** **Pioneer Valley Regional School District** **School Committee**

B= Bernardston L=Leyden N=Northfield W=Warwick  
*See monthly online calendars for scheduled meetings & locations.*

James Bell (B) – [bellj@pvr-sdk12.org](mailto:bellj@pvr-sdk12.org)  
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## **SCHOOL HOURS**

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### **KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 6**

8:50 - 3:10 (Early Release Days- 1:45 dismissal)

### **PRESCHOOL**

8:50 - 3:05 (Fridays- 12:15 dismissal)

***Administrative Assistant Office Hours: 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM***

### **ARRIVAL**

Students arriving before the start of school will be asked to gather on the ramp to the main entrance. Supervision will be available beginning at 8:45 am. Students should not arrive earlier. Students enter the building at 8:50 and head straight to their classrooms. Those arriving after 9:00 tardy and will be required to check in at the front office for a late pass before going to their classrooms.

***Elementary Attendance Policy – See Appendix C for more information***

### **MORNING DROP OFF PROCEDURES**

We will be using a DROP OFF VEHICLE LINE in our back parking lot again this year. This means that families will drop their child(ren) off by the cafeteria entrance anytime between 8:45 and 9:00 am. During this time period, the school will provide adult supervision and students being dropped off will gather by the cafeteria door under the awning (or inside during inclement weather) until the school day begins at 8:50. If you arrive after 9am, your child(ren) will need to enter through the front doors, as the back doors will be locked and not staffed. Students who do not arrive by 9:00am are marked tardy. *(Please note: Bus students and students who walk to school will continue to enter through the front doors by the main office as usual.)*

### **AFTERNOON PICK UP PROCEDURES**

We will be using a PICK UP VEHICLE LINE. When arriving to school by vehicle at dismissal, all drivers will pull through our back parking lot and wait in a pick up line that will start just before the cafeteria entrance. Please turn off your vehicle until the line begins



moving. Idling on school grounds is prohibited per MA law (540 CMR 27.00). A staff member will be present and once the dismissal process begins, we will start loading students, two vehicles at a time, in front of the cafeteria doors. Each vehicle will then proceed out of the parking lot so that the next two vehicles may pull up to the loading zone. *(Please note: Students who either walk/ride a bike home or meet a parent to walk home will exit out the front, along with our bus students. NO Vehicle pick up students will exit the front doors of the building.)*

Children are expected to follow their routine dismissal plan that is on file with the school unless we receive a note or phone call from a parent/guardian with a change of plans. Notes are preferred, but if unexpected changes occur, you may call the school prior to 2:30 PM. Email is not a reliable form of communication for unexpected changes as teachers or office staff may not see it before dismissal.

**---NOTE---**

**The Out of School Time program is not available at this time but we hope it can be re-established later in the year once a funding source is determined and it can be staffed.**

**OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAM**

The **PVRSD Out of School Time Program** provides children (K through 6 grade) with a safe and enriching environment before and after the school day. The program offers a variety of activities including group games, arts and crafts, reading, music, homework time, snack, and free time in an encouraging, safe, and friendly environment.

The Before School Program: 7:30 AM until the start of the school day.

The After School Program: School dismissal until 5:30 PM.

**NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

If there is a "no school" or delayed opening announcement for the Northfield Elementary School (Pioneer Valley Regional School District), due to inclement weather or other conditions, it will be made over the following stations:

Radio stations: WHAI, WMAS, WYRY, WHYN, WRSI, WTSA, WCAT, WKUT, WPVQ.

Television stations: Channels 22, 40 and 6 out of Albany.

The announcement will be made utilizing the media at approximately 6:00 a.m. If a delay announcement is made, please continue to monitor the news for a potential school closing. In the event of a one hour delayed opening, the morning session of preschool will be

conducted. In the event of a two-hour delayed opening, the morning session of this class will not be conducted on that day.

In addition, a phone call from the district's "Rediker" system will be placed in order to notify families of a delay, cancellation, or closing. In order to maintain clear communication for emergencies, **please notify the school of updated phone numbers.**

Emergency dismissal seldom occurs. However, if such a situation should occur due to bad weather or a building emergency, please plan with your child the procedure to be followed upon their arrival home. To assist in this process, an Emergency Procedure Sheet will be sent home each year to be filled out by parents which will identify whether a child will go home as usual or to a different location. In the event of an emergency closing during school hours we have the ability to notify parents via "Blackboard Connect". The After School Program and other after school activities are not available on emergency closing days.

***Elementary Attendance Policy: See Appendix C***

## **CALENDARS**

The Pioneer Valley Regional School District calendar is included in the opening package at the beginning of school. This calendar lists all early release, in-service days, holidays, and vacations. The District School Year Calendar as well as Northfield Elementary School events calendar are available online at: <https://nes.pvrsdk12.org/>. School events and notices are listed for your convenience.

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## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

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**You have entrusted us with the care and wellbeing of your children, and we take this responsibility seriously. We must do everything possible to ensure that your children are safe while they are at school. Everything we do is with this in mind and all safety procedures must be followed without exception.**

## **VISITORS**

Except for student arrival times, all exterior doors of the building will be locked during the day

for the safety and security of students, staff, and visitors. When arriving at the front entrance at NES please ring the buzzer and know that someone from the staff will come to the door as soon as possible. We regret any inconvenience that you may experience but safety is first for all building occupants. This is in keeping with the School Committee Building Safety and Security Policy. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.

Please understand that we do not always recognize every face and even if the office staff may recognize you, others in the building may not. For the safety of the children, the following guidelines must be employed at all times. All visitors/ volunteers will use the main entrance, report directly to the office, and **sign in to receive a visitor pass.**

Visits to our school and/or classrooms by parents are welcomed. They allow parents the opportunity to support the learning process and school community. All school visits must be scheduled in advance with the classroom teacher.

## **PARKING**

Parking at Northfield Elementary can be a challenge due to our limited space! To ensure the safety of the children, and to adhere to town guidelines, it is important that parents or visitors park in designated parking spaces. The fire lane must remain clear and the handicap spaces may only be used for legitimate purposes with a handicap plate/placard. The spaces along the basketball court hill are reserved for preschool families during drop off and pick up. **It is important that parents or visitors not park in the circular driveway in front of the school during the school day between the hours of 8:30 to 3:30 PM.** Please exercise caution in the parking lot during arrival and dismissal time, as there are many cars and children walking. Thank you for your cooperation in regard to this very important matter.

NES is an Idle Free Zone. Idling on school grounds is prohibited per MA law (540 CMR 27.00).

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN**

Northfield Elementary School has a response plan in place in the event of an emergency. We will continue to periodically have drills so that everyone understands the procedures. Plans are on file in the school office should you wish to read the specific plan for Northfield Elementary School.

## **FIRE, EVACUATION, LOCK DOWN AND SHELTER-IN-PLACE PRACTICE**

Fire, Evacuation, Lock down, and Shelter-in-place drills will be held throughout the school year. When directed students will shelter-in-place or exit the building in an orderly fashion.

It is very important that each student remain calm and attentive. Each classroom has a prescribed plan for these emergency procedures. If directed, once all the students have cleared the building and have reported to their designated outside meeting areas, they should wait for further instructions from their classroom teacher.

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## **COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION**

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### **HOME AND SCHOOL COLLABORATION**

It is our belief that student achievement will improve as a result of collaboration between the school and its families. Parent and teacher communication is encouraged. The following are some suggestions that may help to increase the academic success of your children:

- Sign and return all papers that require a signature.
- Encourage positive attitudes toward school.
- Be certain that your child is absent only when necessary.
- See that your child arrives to school on time.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Encourage your children to prioritize their activities, putting school work first.
- Read to your child and encourage your child to read each day.
- Praise children often and have high expectations for their success.

### **PROCESS FOR COMMUNICATION**

Complaints or concerns from students and/or their parents are encouraged to follow the order below whenever possible:

1. Talk first with the teacher for clarification of the issue.
2. Meet with the teacher to discuss possible resolutions.

If the matter is not a classroom concern, or if no satisfactory resolution to a classroom concern is found, please take your concerns forward through these channels in the following order:

- a) Principal
- b) Superintendent of Schools
- c) Full School Committee

Following the above order will help to expedite the procedure in that the individual(s) closest to the situation can most likely be those expected to help with the resolution.

### **NOTICES AND NEWSLETTERS**

It is important that families check students' backpacks each day for any notices, forms, or

classroom communication that may be sent home. In general, we will send home one notice per family. This notice will come home with the youngest student in the family. Families will also receive a monthly lunch calendar as well as a monthly school events calendar. Newsletters will be sent home, and posted on our school website approximately once a month.

Occasionally school announcements and reminders may also be sent using the district's automated phone and/or email system, "Blackboard Connect". Please provide the school with a preferred phone number and email address to receive this correspondence if you do not already get them.

### **OPEN HOUSE**

Open House at the Elementary School is held early in the school year. This is an opportunity for you to visit your child's classroom and become acquainted with your child's teacher and educational program. Individual conferences are not possible at this time but may be arranged.

### **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in the fall and spring for grades Pre-Kindergarten through Six. At this time, your child's progress will be discussed. You are encouraged to make every effort to attend.

While report cards give valuable information in summary form, they can never take the place of personal contact. Only in a conference can the many aspects of the child's educational development and growth be fully explained and discussed between the people who know the child best - the parents and the teacher.

***Parents are welcomed and encouraged to come to school to talk with teachers. However, in the interest of not interrupting the children's school day, we ask parent or guardians to call school to arrange a mutually convenient time to speak with teachers***

### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

The School Volunteer Program provides teachers and other staff members with volunteer assistance by members of the community who have expressed a desire to help provide quality educational services in Northfield. Volunteers may assist teachers by fulfilling tasks which teachers or administrators have specifically requested. The purpose is to supplement and enrich the school program at the direction of the professional staff. We have a variety of needs in the following areas: school library, recess or lunch supervision, chaperoning, and in the classroom.

Parent volunteers are most welcome at Northfield Elementary School. Volunteers must be CORI approved every three years. CORI forms may be completed at the main office. You may contact the classroom teacher or call the school office at 498-5842 if you have time to offer. When arriving to volunteer, please sign in at the office. Thank you in advance for any assistance you may be willing to provide.

### **PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

The Northfield Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization is an incorporated, non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization whose mission is to enrich the educational experience for the school community. This is accomplished by assisting with funding for classroom supplies, school enrichment programs, field trips and other activities. The NES PTO also provides special events to help engage families and build a strong school community. All parents of NES students, as well as all NES Teachers & Staff, are considered to be members of the PTO and are welcome to attend meetings to share ideas about the PTO and its activities. More information about the PTO is available on the PTO website, [www.nespto.org](http://www.nespto.org) and on the PTO Facebook page, Northfield Elementary PTO. Please contact the PTO anytime at [northfieldelementarypto@gmail.com](mailto:northfieldelementarypto@gmail.com).

### **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has enacted legislation which calls for the establishment of a School Council for each elementary, secondary, and independent vocational school in the Commonwealth. Each council is to have the following categories of membership: school representatives (including principal), parents, and community representatives who are not teachers or parents of students at the school.

Councils are to assist principals in adopting educational goals for the school, identifying the educational needs of the students attending the school, and formulating a school improvement plan. Meetings are held monthly and are open to all.

### **USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES**

Community groups or individuals may make arrangements to use the school facilities after school hours by completing a facilities request form and submitting it to the office. The Principal and the Northfield Board of Selectmen must approve arrangements. For further information and a facilities request form, please contact the school office.

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## **CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

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The instructional program in the elementary school is designed to help encourage the pursuit of lifelong learning and to help the individual develop to the limits of his/her capacity the ability to enjoy a socially responsible life. This is primarily accomplished through the pursuit of excellence in the areas of reading, handwriting, spelling, oral and written language, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, health, physical education, and computer education.

The Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks provide a foundation for ongoing curriculum development. Teachers and administration work collaboratively to develop curriculum, which aligns with the state frameworks. Teachers implement this basic curriculum in a creative and thought-provoking manner based upon sound educational theory and each teacher's special talents and strengths.

### **HOMEWORK**

Homework assignments are used to reinforce, to enrich, and to provide the student with the opportunity to practice subject matter independently. Homework may be assigned in grades one through six as needed. In general, homework will not exceed the following allocations per night:

Grade two	- twenty minutes
Grade three	- thirty minutes
Grade four	- forty minutes
Grade five	- fifty minutes
Grade six	- sixty minutes

If a child is consistently exceeding these guidelines or having difficulty with the work, please contact your child's teacher. *Parents need to be aware of the difference between homework and unfinished daily work, which may also need to be completed at home.*

Generally, homework is not given on Friday. However, long term projects may be assigned which require students to set aside blocks of work time per night. These projects provide students with the opportunity to budget their time to complete assignments. Parents or guardians will be notified if a student continuously fails to complete homework assignments on time. If necessary, the teacher may request a meeting with the student/parents to create a plan to ensure the future completion of homework assignments.



**Homework Tips:**

- Provide a quiet place to do homework.
- Set aside a specific time to do homework.
- See that study area is well equipped with pens-pencils, paper, ruler, markers, glue, dictionary.
- Look over homework assignments to check for understanding.
- Encourage students to work independently, but be available to assist during homework time.

**REPORT CARDS**

Student evaluation reports are sent home twice per year; January and June.

Report cards are one of the ways that teachers communicate with parents and guardians about students' academic and social growth. If, after checking a student's report card, parents have any questions they should contact the teacher for an appointment.

The report format is designed to promote consistency and provide clear communication regarding student progress and achievement in relationship to the Massachusetts State Standards and district grade level performance expectations. This report system is intended to provide a comprehensive description of a student's progress from K to 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

The report cards accurately reflect the standards and benchmarks identified by the Pioneer Valley Regional Elementary Schools as necessary for grade level success. Reporting proficiency on standards and benchmarks compares the student's performance against a set of standards. It does not compare the student's performance against the performance of other students. The student is rated on a continuum of performance as it relates to the standards. It is not a record of student's effort; this will be reported in the Social Skills section of the report card.

**What are standards and benchmarks?**

Standards and benchmarks identify the essential knowledge and skills that should be taught and learned in school. They define what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Concepts and skills based on the standards are woven through the grades to provide students with an opportunity to develop increasing levels of understanding over time. Standards and benchmarks are shared across our school district and provide the structure for our local curriculum. The standards used on the report card are aligned with the Massachusetts State Framework standards in mathematics and English Language Arts.

**Why use this type of an evaluation system?**

Standards-based reporting focuses instruction on student-centered learning and thus increases student achievement. Areas where students are below expectancy become evident

which create drive for different instruction and for greater parent involvement in addressing areas of student need. The current system focuses on the product rather than the process. The new evaluation system places the focus on the expectations themselves and the process involved in generating the work or product. At the elementary level, classroom instruction is being geared to build the skills or processes necessary to learn higher level concepts. The “Exceeds, Meets, Making Progress” system allows teachers to assess and determine how well students are meeting expectations— it’s more diagnostic and more effective in focusing on student learning.

### **How to interpret the evaluation system.**

The standards-based system reports how students are progressing toward meeting grade level standards and benchmarks. A lack of proficiency on any standard or benchmark does not signal failure. It means the student needs to continue developing in that area. The following performance levels will be used by elementary teachers to report student achievement:

- 4 – Exceeding Grade Level Expectations
- 3 – Meeting Grade Level Expectations
- 2 – Making Progress toward Grade Level Expectations
- 1 – Not on Grade Level but Making Progress
- M – Modified
- NA –Not Assessed at This Time

### **How can I tell how my child is progressing?**

Progress by students will be reported on grade level standards and benchmarks. Again, a lack of proficiency on any standard or benchmark does not signal failure—but that the student needs to continue developing in that area. Individual student progress will also be identified through the teacher’s comments section of the report card. Conferences and ongoing one-on-one communication among teachers, students, and parents are other ways to accurately report individual student progress and to help all students achieve success.

### **How does the new evaluation system equate with letter grades?**

Simple answer is that it doesn’t. The two systems are not based on the same criteria and are not interchangeable.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The Massachusetts Special Education Act of 1972, commonly referred to as "Chapter 766", ensures that all children with special needs between the ages of three and twenty-two will receive a free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. These disabilities include pupils with temporary or permanent intellectual or emotional problems; sensory or physical impairments including vision or hearing problems, speech or communication disorders, cerebral or perceptual dysfunctions or other specific learning difficulties or

combinations of them which interfere with the student's ability to progress effectively in regular education programs.

The Pioneer Valley School District makes every effort to educate all the students in our schools if possible. We believe that the environment of the community school is the most normalizing and enriching. To this end attempts are made to do the following:

- ◆ To find and evaluate at the earliest possible time all children with learning problems
- ◆ To develop an Individual Education Plan (I. E. P.) for each child who has a disability that significantly impacts his/her educational progress
- ◆ To provide these services within the local schools whenever possible

To accomplish the above responsibilities, Northfield Elementary School has initiated several procedures to identify and remediate children's learning problems:

- ◆ All parents of three and four year old children are notified of yearly screenings to determine learning issues. Communication with local agencies is ongoing to help identify any children not yet enrolled who may have potential special needs. All parents of pre-school aged children may at any time call to arrange such a screening.
- ◆ A Child Study Team meets as needed throughout the year where teachers or parents may meet with the Principal and other teachers to discuss children who are not being successful in the classroom. Adaptations and modifications are discussed and implemented. Occasionally Special Education referrals may be made from this group.
- ◆ Evaluations are carried out by the school SPED Department. The team members may include parents, the principal, the school psychologist, one of the Learning Center teachers, speech-language pathologist, classroom teachers, the Early Childhood Coordinator, and the school nurse. Overseeing the process is the Director of Special Education. A team chairperson is designated to organize the meeting, and to act as a parent liaison. Parent involvement is both mandatory and encouraged. This program benefits many students allowing them to be as successful as possible. At Northfield Elementary School the Special Education Department consists of two special education teachers, school psychologist, speech-language pathologist, an Early Childhood Coordinator, occupational and physical therapists and several special education aides, and assistants.

If you have specific concerns about your child's academic development, please do not hesitate to contact the teacher or principal.

## **TESTING**

State standardized testing typically occurs each year for students in grades three through six at NES and throughout the state. MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) is an example of assessments that measure whether students are on track to be successful in college and their careers. These high quality computer-based assessments in Mathematics, English Language Arts, and Science Engineering and Technology give teachers, schools, students, and parents better information whether students are on track in their learning and for success after high school. It provides tools to help teachers customize learning to meet student needs. MCAS testing will be administered this spring to students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 10. The tests reflect the curriculum outlined in the State Curriculum Frameworks. These tests will evaluate the student's ability to think critically and to problem solve. MCAS test questions are available online. If you would like your own copy of prior questions, please visit the DESE website at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html> and <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu>

## **TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLIES**

All textbooks and curricular materials are supplied at the expense of the district. These books and materials are the property of the district and are loaned to the pupils. When pupils lose, destroy, or damage any schoolbooks, school equipment or school property, parents are responsible and shall be asked by the school personnel to make restitution. The teacher will inform the parent of any supplies students may need to buy.

## **LIBRARY**

Students in pre-kindergarten through grade 2 may borrow one book and students in grades 3 through 6 may borrow three books or as needed for school projects for two weeks. Students are responsible for returning any overdue books. If a book is not returned, he/she is responsible for the cost of the book. If a library book is damaged, the replacement charge applies.

## **FIELD TRIPS, SCHOOL EVENTS, DISTRICT EVENTS**

Trips to sites throughout the area can be an important enrichment activity within the scope of the classroom curriculum. Trips connected to classroom curricula will be planned by school staff. Notices and permission slips will be sent home for each individual field trip.

In addition, the location of Northfield Elementary allows for exciting enrichment activities right here in Northfield! A walking field trip permission form will be sent home in September. This will allow classroom teachers to access the wonderful environment surrounding our school.

Children are expected to participate in all school-sponsored or district-sponsored events. These events may be graduation exercises, fine arts concerts, band/music performances,

field trips, or other similar events. These activities are scheduled as part of our regular approved curriculum, and, as such, attendance by the children is expected. If you elect not to have your child participate in a scheduled field trip or district event, your family may need to make alternate arrangements for your child.

**All field trip chaperones must be CORI approved. CORI forms can be completed at the front office and must be updated every three years.**

### **ELECTRONIC RESOURCES ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

The Pioneer Valley Regional School District has established certain protocols to insure the safety of the school community, the security of the computer network, and compliance with applicable law. **This policy can be found on the district website.**

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

We encourage families to carefully consider the ramifications of sending electronic devices to school with children. Electronic devices from home, such as iPods, MP3 players, cell phones, or other electronic devices cause distraction and are not allowed to be used during the school day.

Students bringing cell phones to school must ensure that they are turned off during all school hours, which includes: snack, recess, lunch, during class, and restroom breaks and cell phones must be stored in student backpacks (not kept on their person). Students who fail to comply with this policy will have their cell phone confiscated by their teacher, staff member or administrator (to be returned to a parent/guardian).

In the event a parent/guardian needs to contact their child, they should call the school office directly and not their child's cell phone.

It is understood that NES and the PVRSD is not responsible or liable for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic devices.

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## **STUDENT SAFETY, CONDUCT, AND DISCIPLINE**

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### **STUDENT SAFETY AND WELL-BEING**

The district has been carefully following the creation of legislation adopted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The legislation stresses three components as essential to a school's efforts to prevent and address bullying:

- Age-appropriate instruction for students in each grade on bullying prevention incorporated in a school's curriculum. **PVRSD elementary schools implement the *Second Step* curriculum in grades PK-6.**
- A clear statement that bullying of any type is not permitted in our schools, the requirement that all adult and student witnesses report it immediately, and clear and easily understood procedures for responding to and investigating reports of bullying. **We have a bullying statement and established policies and procedures for reporting and investigating incidents of bullying when they occur that are in compliance with the new MA Anti-Bullying Law.**
- The development of a bullying prevention and intervention plan to be implemented, including strategies to protect those who report bullying and appropriate services for students who have been bullied or are bullies. **Many strategies and services are already in place and we have started the process of documenting our prevention and intervention plan. The MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will be required to provide guidance and resources.**

Throughout this year, the district will ensure that our policies, programs, and strategies meet its intent. We will look for ways to strengthen and improve our efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of all our students. We welcome your ideas or questions.

***See Appendix D for Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy***

### **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:**

Respect is our guiding principle. It is expected that children and adults will treat each other with respect. We strive to use supportive language and a respectful tone while keeping the Golden Rule in mind. We model and expect kindness and good manners.

- Teachers, staff, and students at Northfield Elementary School work together in a proactive way to promote appropriate behavior. We help each other understand and reflect on our behavior. Children are empowered to solve their own problems and, when appropriate, are involved in determining consequences for their behavior.

- Developing social skills is a priority in our school. Children need time and guidance in practicing cooperation, negotiation, problem solving, communication and empathy in various school settings.
- A major goal for establishing rules is that students develop mechanisms for self-control such as the ability to attend, the ability to use words rather than force, and the ability to make appropriate choices.
- Rules for each classroom are established by teachers and students at the beginning of each school year. In establishing rules together, we build a foundation upon which our community develops. There are also school-wide rules generated by the children.

### **CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR:**

When students do not follow school rules, consequences are respectful, related, logical, and reasonable. If necessary, parents or guardians will be informed.

- ❖ In instances of disruptive behavior, the student is :
  - given a reminder or warning
  - timed out in the classroom
  - timed out in a neighboring classroom
  - brought to the office to speak with the principal and parent or guardian may be called (child may be sent to the office with a note from the teacher.)
- ❖ In instances in which a student physically endangers another person, that student shall be brought to the principal immediately. In all such cases, the student's family will be notified of the incident. The student may serve an in-school suspension. Repeated or extreme aggressive acts will be handled at the discretion of the principal and may result in an out-of-school suspension.
- ❖ In instances in which property is damaged, stolen or destroyed, the consequences shall be determined by the principal and attending teacher.
- ❖ In repeated or extreme instances in which a student uses hurtful language (put-downs, bullying, swearing, name calling) toward other students, teachers, or staff, that student shall be brought to the principal immediately. The student's parent or guardian will be notified of the incident. Repeated incidents may result in an in-school suspension.

### **RECESS**

Recess is designed to give your children vigorous exercise, a time to be active and learn to play cooperatively. During regularly scheduled recess periods, there will be adults on the



playground. Students are asked to stay within sight of the adults and if they need any special attention, they should see the adult on duty first. All children are required to participate and a doctor's note is necessary for staying inside on outside recess days. During the winter months, please be sure that children dress appropriately for the weather conditions.

Recess at Northfield Elementary School is a time when the children should be involved in safe play. In order to insure this, we have developed rules which should make this possible. We encourage all children to respect the rights of others. As some rules differ according to grade levels, final discretion is left to the teachers on duty.

### Recess Guidelines

- Practice fair and inclusive play.
- Practice safe body/safe touch.
- Stay where adults can see you.
- Use equipment and playground materials appropriately.
- Solve conflicts peacefully.

### Playground Rules

#### **Physical Boundaries**

- Children and duty teacher must be able to see each other at all times.
- Children are to stay within the mowed area, designated by grade level.
- Only children in PreK-K are allowed to use the primary play structure.

#### **General Rules**

- Soccer and other team games are only to be played on the fields (except basketball).
- The following objects may not be thrown: snowballs, stones, sticks, or sand.
- No running with rocks or sticks.
- Garden wall is not for climbing
- Garden area is not a play area during recess
- Sidewalk chalk may be used on the sidewalk/pavement only
- Keep branches, leaves, and flowers on the trees
- No climbing or hanging from trees

#### **Ten-Spin**

- Sit in seats or stand on standing spots
- Wait for students to be ready before spinning

#### **Zipper**

- One person at a time

#### **Structure**

- No objects brought onto structure (including snow, sticks, or mulch)

- Children may not play tag or run around/under the structure areas.
- No climbing on the top of the play structure

#### **Tag**

- Tag games may be played in open grassy areas
- Use a gentle touch, with an empty hand

#### **Slide**

- Students should check to see that the slide is clear before they slide.
- Slide face forward, feet first.
- Students are not allowed to climb up the slides.
- Students may not sit on top of the tube slides or jump off the slide.

#### **Swings**

- Students must be seated with legs forward while swinging back and forth (no twisting or side to side swinging)
- One person per swing
- Children waiting to swing should wait off the wood chips.
- Slow swing before getting off of it

#### **Musical Instruments**

- Use musical mallets on instruments only
- Drums may be used with hands only
- No climbing on instruments

#### **Nature Nook**

- Small natural items allowed
- Respect others' creations (ex. You may add on to someone's creation, but not intentionally destroy it)

#### **Winter**

- Respect others' snow creations
- Winter clothing should be worn in colder weather; however, hat, coat, or gloves may be removed at child's discretion with the goal of self-regulating (this may be overruled by adults when temperatures are low)
- Boots, snow pants, and mittens must be worn in the snow.
- Snow pile may be used for sledding and climbing when not icy (no tunnels)
- Snowballs may not be made or thrown
- No walking or running on icy areas
- Ice chunks must remain on the ground

Children should not play near the classroom windows as this may disturb other classes in session. In the winter, this becomes a safety issue, with the possibility of snow coming off the roof. Children should exit and enter the building in an orderly fashion. Children are not to re-enter the building during recess without permission.

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## **TRANSPORTATION**

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### **BUS POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

In late August the policies, guidelines, rules, bus routes and school calendar are available at the Northfield IGA and at the school's main office when school begins. This also lists the bus companies pick up times, bus number and route taken. **The bus company used is F.M. Kuzmeskus Bus Co. at 863-2595. Questions or concerns regarding bus matters should be addressed to the bus company.**

#### **Prior to Loading:**

1. Be at the stopping place five minutes prior to designated pick up time and ready to get into the bus with the least possible delay in order to keep the bus on schedule and to minimize traffic hazards.
1. Students loading the bus on a street where the bus passes in both directions are to wait until the bus passes on their side so they will not have to cross the road.
2. Students having to cross the road when loading and discharging are to cross in front of the bus, upon the driver's signal. All pupils are advised to use extreme caution by looking at traffic both ways before crossing.
3. Do not stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
4. Remain at least five feet from the bus when it stops to pick up, and move forward only when the door opens.
5. After boarding the bus, take a seat as quickly as possible.

#### **Student School Bus Behavior Expectations:**

All students riding school buses within the Districts served by F.M. Kuzmeskus, Inc. are expected to follow a few basic guidelines while riding the bus. These guidelines are put in place to assist the school bus drive with the safest possible transportation to and from school each day. All students are expected to follow "school rules" whenever they are on the bus. In addition, the following simple rules must be adhered to:

1. Students must remain seated, facing forward, while the bus is in motion.
2. Students must keep their hands to themselves.
3. Students must use "inside voices" meaning yelling and screaming must be avoided.
4. Students' personal belongings must be kept inside their book bag or knapsack.
5. Weapons of any sort may not be transported on the school bus.
6. Vandalism of vehicle or its contents is not permitted.

**IT IS MOST IMPORTANT THAT ALL CHILDREN ARE SAFE WHILE ON THE SCHOOL BUS. RIDING THE BUS IS A PRIVILEGE AND ANY INFRACTION OF BUS RULES MAY RESULT IN THE LOSS OF THIS PRIVILEGE.**

## CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATION OF EXPECTATIONS

Any student found in violation of the above Safety Rules will receive Bus Conduct Reports with the following consequences:

**1<sup>st</sup> Report** – School official meets with the student to discuss the inappropriate behavior. Notations regarding meeting are made on the Conduct Report and it is signed by the student and parent and returned to the bus driver.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Report** – Parent must meet with the School Official to discuss the inappropriate behavior. Notations regarding meeting are made on the Conduct Report and it is signed by the student and parent and returned to the bus driver.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Report** – Student bus privileges are suspended for a minimum of two school days. Parent must meet with School Official prior to student's bus privileges being reinstated. Notations regarding meeting are made on the Conduct Report and it is signed by the student and parent and returned to the bus driver.

***Subsequent infractions may result in long term or permanent suspension from the school bus. Additionally, severe violation may result in immediate disciplinary actions/suspension from the bus regardless of the number of bus reports previously issued.***

Please note:

- Kindergarten children must be met by a known caretaker when being dropped off. Children who are not met will be returned to the school.
- A regular and consistent bus schedule is necessary for every child. Children may be transported to and from home, or be discharged at another consistent location on the route.
- A change to the regular home-bound bus travel of your child must be authorized in writing by the parent, and received by the child's teacher no later than arrival at school on the same day. The permission note must contain: your child's name, date of change, name and address of the child that your child will visit and travel with, and your signature. The school will deliver a copy to the bus driver.
- Students transported in a school bus are under the authority of the school district and under the control of the bus driver. Bus rides are considered to be an extension of the school day and student behavior is expected to conform to school rules. Disorderly conduct, persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver, or any infraction of the rules of the Kuzmeskus Bus Company shall be sufficient reason for the student to be denied the privilege of riding the bus in future.
- Parents may ride the bus only with prior approval of the school administrator.
- For safety reasons, bus drivers are trained to carefully inspect their vehicles at the conclusion of every run. If vandalism of property is noted, the student(s) seated where damage occurred will be held accountable.

## BICYCLES, SKATEBOARDS, SCOOTERS, AND ROLLERBLADES

Students may ride bicycles scooters to school with permission from their parent/guardian. Helmets must be worn in compliance with Massachusetts State Law. We urge parents to review safe riding procedures and perform a regular safety inspection of bicycles. There is

to be no riding on school grounds during the school day. Students are reminded to walk their bikes on the sidewalk which leads to the bike racks located at the side of the building near the basketball court. Bicycles should be secured as the school is not responsible for stolen or damaged bicycles.

Skateboards, scooter, and rollerblades must be carried once on school property.

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### **FOOD SERVICE GUIDELINES**

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Pioneer Valley Regional School District offers parents the opportunity to select the best meal plan to meet their children's needs, the family budget and lifestyle:

- Breakfast and/or lunch packed at home, brought to school and eaten in the cafeteria.
- Breakfast and/or lunch purchased at full price at your child's school.
- Breakfast and/or lunch at free or reduced lunch fees for families who qualify according to income guidelines. Families may apply at any time during the school year if there is a change in income status.

We are committed to working with parents to ensure that all school age children have adequate nourishment. Studies have conclusively associated proper nourishment with a child's ability to learn.

Our PVRSD School Lunch / Breakfast Program operates on a *non-profit* basis and is not supported by local tax dollars. Its operational budget comes from daily revenues and state and federal subsidies. It is the responsibility of parents who choose to purchase or receive subsidized meals from our program to stay current with their bills and to notify Food Service of any changes in their income status so that we may provide you with Free and Reduced meal applications on a timely basis. Pre-payments may be made by cash, check, bank check or by setting up an account on Pay Schools Central ([www.payschoolscentral.com](http://www.payschoolscentral.com)). The following guidelines are currently in effect:

All meals must be paid for **in advance**. Money may be sent in on a monthly or weekly basis with your child. Deductions are made only when students purchase school meals or milks. **After five days of non-payment, parents will be notified of their negative balance.**

Families are encouraged to complete a Free/Reduced Lunch Application at any time during the school year. Should the application for free or reduced status be approved, families are

still responsible for the balance due, as the change of status is **not** retroactive for past due balances.

### CAFETERIA INFORMATION

Students may bring their own lunches and purchase milk or buy a school lunch. Snack milk is also available. Prices for lunch and milk are subject to change as voted by the School Committee.

#### 2021-2022 LUNCH PRICES

	Breakfast	Lunch	* Milk Only
Adult	\$3.00	\$4.60	\$ .65
Child	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$ .65
Child Free	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$ .65
Child reduced	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$ .65
Child Second Lunch	NA	\$3.25	

Nutritional, well-balanced lunches are provided. Free and reduced lunches are provided for children whose parents meet the appropriate criteria established by the Massachusetts Department of Education. Applications for free or reduced lunches are distributed to all students in September and may be obtained at any time throughout the year from the school office. **\* Please note, snack milk or milk with home lunch is charged at full rate for all students regardless of free or reduced lunch status.**

A lunch calendar will be sent home prior to the first of each month and will be posted on our website.

Classes are accompanied to the cafeteria by assigned staff. The cafeteria staff fills each student's tray with the main course. Each child is encouraged to take a little of everything being served. Candy, gum and soda are not permitted in school.

Students are reminded to use appropriate table manners. Conversation should be the same as one might use in a restaurant. Once seated, students must stay in that spot until their lunch is finished. Sharing food in the cafeteria is not allowed. Seating in the cafeteria is at the discretion of the Lunchroom Supervisors.

The Lunchroom Supervisor dismisses each table individually, however, students should never feel rushed and may remain eating for the entire lunch period if they choose to do so. Students are responsible for maintaining their individual table place. When they have finished eating they will deposit the recyclables and trash in the designated containers. Their tray is

then brought to the receiving window.

After students are dismissed from their tables they must wait in line until the Lunchroom Supervisor excuses them. They walk to their classrooms in an orderly fashion. It is expected that rules of good health, good manners, and common sense be used during this lunch period.

Family members are welcome to have lunch with their children at any time during the year but it is important that you call the office to reserve lunch.

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## **HEALTH**

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### **STAFF**

A registered nurse coordinates the health care needs of each student. This includes complying with school health policies mandated by the state of Massachusetts, screening and referring students, attending to sick and injured students, facilitating positive student responses to normal development. Utilizing a team approach, the school nurse promotes the health and safety of the students, and administers medication per doctor's orders and employs early intervention with potential health problems.

### **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

At the beginning of the school year each child receives an Emergency Information form. These forms provide the information necessary to reach parents, guardians, or alternates promptly in case of illness or accidents. Because individual health conditions may vary among children within a family, parents who have more than one child in our school are asked to fill out a separate card for each child. In the event a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the name of a person to be notified in cases of emergency must be included on each card. Please be sure the persons you name are willing and able to serve in this capacity; whenever possible, please list local people.

### **PHYSICAL EXAMS**

Physical exams are required for entrance to pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 4, 7, and 11. Annual physical exams are required for all students who play sports. Students are encouraged to go to their own physicians. Your own pediatrician has more knowledge of your child and conducts a more thorough examination. Maintaining a connection with your physician is an important opportunity for you and your child. Students who transfer into the Pioneer Valley Regional School District must show evidence of a physical exam within the past six (6) months or make an appointment to satisfy this requirement. The Massachusetts



Dept. of Public Health requires verification of completion of school immunization requirements for all children attending school.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

In accordance with MGL Ch 75 Sec.15, no student will be admitted to school without documentation of complete immunization. Private immunizations and boosters will be administered by the physician. Any family unable to arrange for the required immunizations will be assisted through referrals by the School Nurse to obtain them. Lead screening is required prior to entering pre-kindergarten or kindergarten. A current immunization schedule is available from the School Nurse. Exemptions for medical or religious reasons must be requested in writing.

### **ILLNESS AND INJURIES AT SCHOOL**

If a student is sick or has been injured seriously enough to require further evaluation, school staff will contact a parent or guardian. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to take the child home and/or arrange for any needed medical follow-up. The School Nurse will administer first aid only. In case of serious injury requiring emergency medical treatment and a parent or guardian cannot be reached, an ambulance will be called if necessary and a school staff member will accompany the student to the nearest hospital emergency room. For your child's sake, as well as for the sake of others, please keep your child home if he/she is not well. **Your child must be vomit / fever-free for 24 hours without medication before he/she is permitted to return to school.** If your child has a contagious illness such as strep throat, conjunctivitis (pinkeye), or impetigo, he/she must be evaluated by his/her physician and then may return to school 24 hours after beginning the prescribed treatment. Please contact the school nurse if your child has a contagious illness. Notices concerning contagious disease exposure in the school are sent home with the students. Please read these as they contain information about signs and symptoms, and school policy concerning re-entry into class.

### **MEDICATION POLICY**

The following guidelines must be followed to ensure safe and appropriate administration of all needed medications during school hours. This includes non-prescription medications that are required on a regular basis. State mandated forms need to be completed before any medication is given in school. These forms may be obtained from the school nurse.

1. Written consent from the parent or guardian for the administration of medication during school hours. If a student has multiple medications, including as needed medications, they must be listed individually on this form.
2. A signed and dated order by the doctor that includes the need for the medication, the name of the medication, and the dosage, route of administration, and time(s) to be administered.

3. A medication administration plan (a med plan) is completed and signed by both the parent and the school nurse for each medication taken at school.

4. Each prescription medication should be brought to the Health Office by a responsible adult, in the original container. No more than a 30 day supply of medication can be accepted at one time. **Please do not send medication to school with students.** Unmonitored medication endangers the health and safety of every child in the school. Medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the health office. All meds are to be picked up at the end of the school year. Meds are not stored during the summer. Any meds left will be discarded.

5. Students must come to the Health Room for each medication dose. It is each student's responsibility to appear promptly at the prescribed time(s).

6. If a child has a short term prescription (those requiring administration for ten days or less), the pharmacy labeled container may be used in lieu of a physician's order. A letter from the parent requesting that the medication be administered and the time of the administration must accompany the medication.

7. An Interval Health History is sent home at the beginning of the year. It must be filled out and signed by the parent/guardian each year. This form asks for information about your child's health, gives permission for the school nurse to treat, as well as offering an optional consent for Tylenol, Ibuprofen, and Benadryl to be given at school should the need arise. These medications can be given no more than 3 times per month without a written order from a physician. Completion of this form assists the nurse in her assessment of your child's health/illness status.

8. If your child has a life-threatening allergic reaction to bee stings or other substances (or if he/she has a sibling who reacts), please contact the School Nurse. It is crucial for the school to have a written protocol for dealing with this type of reaction on an individual basis should the need arise. Also, if an Epi-pen has been prescribed for your child, please provide one to be kept in the Health Room. (If your child will participate in the after-school program, a second Epi-pen will be needed, as staff from this program do not have access to the Health Room after school hours.)

## **SCREENINGS**

Students in grades 1 & 4 are screened for height & weight to determine their body mass index as required by the Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health. All students are screened annually for vision and hearing. These screenings are not diagnostic. Any child who falls outside the expected parameters for their age or size group, their parent/guardian will be notified. A

recommendation for follow up with the appropriate referral will be included with this notification.

Postural Screening is done annually for students in grades 5-9. Changes in the spine often develop slowly and without pain during these growth-spurt years. The initial examination is done by the School Nurse. Recommendations for further evaluation by a physician are directly forwarded to the parent/guardian. Exemption from this screening is allowed if a student's parent or guardian provides a written request. In this case, the student must be screened by his/her own physician and written verification from the physician given to the school nurse.

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## **GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION**

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### **PETS/ANIMALS**

There is nothing cuter than a fuzzy little animal. Most of us love them and have no problem being near them. That is not the case with all children or adults. Some children are highly allergic to many kinds of animals. Other children have had a frightening experience around animals that may have included being mauled or bitten. Due to these two reasons, we ask that you please do not bring animals with fur/hair into the school. If you make arrangements with a classroom teacher to show an animal, these animals should be viewed outside on the playground.

### **BASKETBALL COURT**

This court may be enjoyed by all members of the community, including NES students. The court will be available to the public during non-school hours only. Please note: For safety reasons, the court will be closed during arrival (8:45-9:00) and dismissal (3:00-3:20) as there is a high volume of traffic in this immediate area. Students may not be at the school prior to 8:45 using the court unless they are accompanied by their parents/guardians. Students who are "walkers" must leave school premises at the closing of the school day and while a crossing guard is on duty. If older students wish to return after 3:20 to use the court or playground they may do so with your permission but please know that supervision is not provided by the school.

### **PLAYGROUND**

As with the basketball court, the school playground and fields are available for public use outside of school hours and while not in use for a school or recreation department function.

Please follow the safety and age guidelines listed on the play structures and signage posted.

### **CELEBRATIONS**

At times, teachers may choose to have their class partake in certain celebrations. Please contact your child's teacher if this practice is contrary to your personal beliefs.

Please familiarize yourself with the PVRSD Wellness Plan to help plan healthy snacks your child might share with his/her class. **Always contact your child's teacher prior to sending in any types of food for shared consumption to ensure that all students' dietary needs and allergies are considered.**

Parents are also asked to refrain from having their child distribute party invitations in school. This is uncomfortable for excluded children. Families should make use of the student/classroom directories prepared by the NES PTO.

### **STUDENT/CLASSROOM DIRECTORY**

Each fall the NES PTO will create a grade level student directory. Families may voluntarily provide their address and phone number to be shared with other families in that grade level. This can help to facilitate social interaction outside of school and facilitate communication between families. Families always have the option to elect that their information not be included.

### **TELEPHONE**

School telephones are not for student use. Students should come to school prepared for the scheduled daily activities. They should make after school plans outside of school. Classes should not be expected to be interrupted to accommodate individual's personal arrangements. In an emergency situation, children may make phone calls from the office phone with permission from the secretary or principal. Students may not use their cell phones during school hours.

### **PICTURES**

School pictures, both individual and class, are taken each fall. Pictures will be taken in late September each school year with retakes taken within approximately 30-days. Information regarding the process and scheduled dates will be sent home in the fall.

## **CLOTHING**

Children are encouraged to choose clothing appropriate for the school environment and weather conditions. During the cooler months, the children should dress accordingly and wear a sweater, sweatshirt, or light jacket when out at recess. Students are encouraged to leave a seasonal spare change of clothes at school.

**During the winter months, children should come to school wearing appropriate warm clothing, including boots, in order to allow them to participate in outdoor recess.** Children are required to wear snow pants and boots to recess if they are to play in the snow. If there is snow on the playground, the children without snow pants and boots must remain on the blacktop area. **Heavy outerwear (coats, jackets, snow pants, boots, winter hats/hoods etc.) are not to be worn in school.**

Sneakers are required for weekly participation in physical education. Once sanding and salting of the roads, sidewalks, and parking lots begins, the children must wear a different pair of sneakers in the gymnasium. This may be an inexpensive pair of sneakers and may be kept in the student's locker in school for gym class. It is also necessary that students wear appropriate clothing for physical exercise on days when they have physical education class. **Flip flops and/or sandals without back straps are not to be worn on the playground as they pose safety issues while using the playground equipment.**

**Students may not wear clothing that is too revealing (scanty, transparent or tight) or which displays obscenity, profanity, violence, or offensive messages. The administration reserves the right to prohibit the wearing of any clothing, jewelry, etc. that could prove harmful to the health or safety of other students.**

## **LOST AND FOUND**

All lost clothing will be displayed on a table near the cafeteria entrance. Please encourage your child to look there when they have lost an item. It is recommended that name labels be placed on sweaters, jackets, and other items for easier return. Parents are urged to visit the school to claim lost articles. Small items are kept in the office. If small items are not claimed within two weeks they may be given to the child who turned it into the office. The school accepts no responsibility for items lost. Several times throughout the year unclaimed clothing is donated.

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# ***Policies***

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## **Appendix A**

### **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Notice to Parents(s) and Guardian(s):

The Pioneer Valley Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, housing status, or disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment in its programs and activities.

If the school determines that discrimination or harassment has occurred, the student may run the risk of such penalties as loss of privileges, including social suspension, detentions, suspensions, probationary status, prosecution in court and expulsion. A student can incur penalties for impeding a disciplinary investigation.

If you have questions or concerns please contact Chris Maguire, who is the District's Coordinator for Title VI, Title IX and Section 504.

Chris Maguire  
97 F. Sumner Turner Rd.  
Northfield MA 01360  
(413) 498-2911



## **Appendix B**

### **STUDENT RECORDS**

Under Chapters 71, 71B, and section 13 of Chapter 76 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, student's temporary records (not including transcripts of grades) shall be destroyed five years after transfer, withdrawal, or graduation from school. Any student and/or parents have the right to receive, upon request, such information in whole or in part before its destruction.

#### **Non-Custodial Parents**

Massachusetts law has been revised to standardize the process by which elementary and secondary schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents"). The law, M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 34H, is intended to encourage parents to be involved in and informed about the education of their children, while protecting the rights and safety of all parties.

The school is required to give full rights to either parent, unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, state statute, or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation, or custody that specifically revokes these rights. Section 34H (b) requires the non-custodial parent to submit a written request to the principal annually. A copy of the required affidavit specifying the mandated documentation is available.

Upon receipt of the completed affidavit the school must immediately notify the custodial parent of the receipt of the request and that the school will provide the student record information to the requesting parent pursuant to Section 34H after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides to the principal of the school with documentation of any court order which prohibits the non-custodial parent from having contact with the child, or prohibits the distribution of the student record information, or is a temporary or permanent order issued to provide protection to the custodial parent or any child in the custodial parent's custody from abuse by the requesting parent, unless the protective order specifically allows access to the student record information.

For a more complete explanation of your rights under the law you may wish to consult with your attorney or the courts.

## **Appendix C**

### **ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE POLICY**

We cannot stress too greatly the importance of your child being in school every day, on time, if he/she is to achieve the greatest success in his/her work. Regular attendance is expected of all students. It is impossible to completely make up everything that is missed. A typical school day is filled with learning that is not limited to books, i.e. group projects, discussions, and activities. Paper work can be made up, but the valuable learning opportunities cannot. However, when children are sick, they should stay home from school. If your child will be absent or tardy, please call the school between 8:30-9:30 A.M.

Please make every attempt to have your child at school on time. This means your child should be in their classroom before the school day start time--not just entering the building. Our day is scheduled and when a child is late, something is missed. Each absence or tardy is recorded. Parents and students are reminded that the number of school absences is reported on the Report Card at the end of each marking period. In addition to this, every effort will be made to notify parents by letter when absences begin to be excessive. Parents are strongly urged to assist the school by supporting its attendance policy.

#### **ABSENCE PROCEDURE**

On the day a student is absent, parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to call the school before 9:30 a.m. On the day the student returns to school, a written excuse note from the parent stating the date and reason for absence is required and must be turned in to the office upon arrival.

#### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

From time to time, absence from school is unavoidable and legitimate. The following are the only acceptable excuses for absences:

1. Personal illness and/or hospitalization (after 3 consecutive days, a doctor's note and/or school nurse examination may be required);
2. Serious illness or death in the family;
3. A religious obligation;
4. Medical appointments that cannot be made at a time other than during school hours;
5. Severe storm or impassable roads;
6. Approved school activities;
8. Court appearance;

**Any other reason for absence is unexcused.**

## **PLANNED ABSENCES**

By June the School Committee establishes the specific dates for school to be in session for the following academic year in order to allow parents and students adequate time to schedule trips and family vacations to coincide with periods in which school is not in session. By doing so, the Committee recognizes the importance of students' consistent and prompt attendance to school. **Under unique or unusual circumstances**, a parent may request for his student(s) to leave school prior to the completion of the marking period or for a period of time during the marking period for reasons not covered under acceptable reasons for school absence. **Parents/students must make such requests to the Principal, with reasons stated, at least two weeks prior to the departure date.** The Principal will respond to all such requests. If a parent/student fails to notify and receive approval by the school, the absence will be treated as truancy.

Students who miss school due to family vacations, which occur on school days, are responsible for making up all missed work. Teachers **may** be able to provide the work ahead of time, but this is not always possible. Please plan accordingly. Note these are unexcused absences.

## **RESPONSE TO EXCESSIVE ABSENCES OR TARDINESS**

**Following 5 incidences of absence or tardiness** – letter home from principal reminding parents/guardians of the attendance policy and their responsibility in supporting it.

**Following 10 incidences of absence or tardiness** – certified letter home from principal requesting meeting to develop plan to improve attendance.

**Following 15 incidences of absence or tardiness** – certified letter home from principal requesting meeting to revisit plan to improve attendance; possible referral to Department of Children and Families

## **DISMISSAL**

**Written permission from the parent/guardian is required for a child to change regular dismissal procedures.**

1. Students being dismissed from school early must present a written note from their parent/guardian before school begins. These notes should have time leaving, return, and reason for dismissal. **The only legitimate excuses for dismissal are the same as the reasons for excused absence.** (See Excused Absence). Frequent dismissals for appointments may require a note from the doctor or dentist. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should make every attempt to avoid scheduling appointments during the school day. Parents are requested to check in with the office and sign their child out of class. Children will not be released to anyone other than parents or legal guardians without advance written notice. Should circumstances arise which make it necessary for someone else to pick up your child

from school, be sure that you have made advance written arrangements with your child's teacher, who will inform the School Office.

2. In the event that plans change during the school day, a student may be excused from school via a telephone call from a parent, or a parent may come to the school office and directly request dismissal.

3. Special Emergency Early Dismissal: During the course of the year there may be times when school must close early due to weather or an emergency situation. At the beginning of the school year, an Early Emergency Release Form will be issued to every family to provide us with contact information as well as early dismissal arrangements. The district will make every effort to announce early closings on the radio, and will **continue to refine the use of the Blackboard Connect phone system.**

A NOTE IS REQUIRED IN THE FOLLOWING INSTANCES:

1. If a child must leave school at any time other than the regular dismissal time.
2. If a child who regularly rides the school bus is to be picked up by anyone, including a parent.
3. If a child who regularly rides the school bus plans to walk or ride a bicycle home or to another destination.
4. If a child rides a bus to any destination other than his/her regularly scheduled bus stop. (Such a request will normally be honored, depending on the capacity of the bus.)

**If the school does not receive a written notification or phone call by 2:30 pm for transportation changes, your child will be placed on her/his regular bus.** If you are picking up your child before 3:05, the end of the school day, please report to the office and sign him/her out. The school secretary will call your child to the office.

**If you are here at the end of the school day to pick up your child, please wait on the sidewalk, not on the ramp, outside the school, until your child's class is dismissed.**

## Appendix D

### **BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION -Summary for Parents and Guardians, and Student Handbooks**

On May 3, 2010 Governor Patrick signed an *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*. This new law prohibits bullying and retaliation in all public and private schools, and requires schools and school districts to take certain steps to addressing bullying incidents. Parts of the law (M.G.L. c. 71, & 370) that are important for students and parents or guardians to know are described below.

These requirements are included in the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("the Plan.") The Plan includes the requirements of the new law, and also information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation, or to respond to it when it occurs. In developing the Plan, schools and districts consulted with school and local community members, including parents and guardians.

*Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, as noted below. Schools or districts may add specific language to these definitions to clarify them, but may not alter their meaning or scope. Plans may also include additional definitions that are aligned with local policies and procedures.*

#### Definitions

Aggressor is a student or a member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation towards a student.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school 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 or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyberbullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, is a situation in which bullying causes the

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

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.

School Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

### Prohibition Against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds,
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds,
- at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether it takes place on or off school grounds,
- at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school,
- through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased or used by a school district or school (for example, on a computer or over the Internet),
- at any program or location that is not school-related, or through the use of personal technology or electronic device, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited.

### Report Bullying

Anyone, including a parent or guardian, student, or school staff member, can report bullying or retaliation. Reports can be made in writing or orally to the principal or another staff member, or reports may be made anonymously. **[Megan Desmarais, Principal 498-5842 or [desmaraism@pvrsdk12.org](mailto:desmaraism@pvrsdk12.org)]**

School staff members must report immediately to the principal or his/her designee if they

witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation. Staff members include, but are not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessionals.

When the school principal or his/her designee receives a report, he or she shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school principal or designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, he or she shall (i) notify the parents or guardians of the target, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the parents or guardians of an aggressor; (iii) take appropriate disciplinary action; and (iv) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Support Services: The strategy to help the target and aggressor will be based on the nature of the offense, the age of the victims & aggressors, and the decision based upon the results of the investigation. It may require the district to review its student curriculum to assure it is clear, and achieves the objectives of properly educating and imparting the message to the students. This will require pre & posttests of understanding and comprehending lessons. This district incorporates 2nd Step in the elementary schools, and practices Positive Behavior Support.

The counseling services for the aggressor and victim may include the following:

Social emotional skills programs to prevent bullying by:

- Classroom Teachers
- Guidance Counselors
- School Adjustment Counselors
- School Psychologists
- Behavior Analyst Intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors:

To provide services for targets, aggressors and their families, the district uses culturally and linguistically appropriate resources outside the district. The district maintains a list of translation and/or interpreter services.

#### Professional Development for School and District Staff

School and districts are obligated to provide ongoing professional development to increase the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.

The content of such professional development is to include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (iii)

information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying; (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyber bullying; and (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber bullying.





**Appendix C**  
**PIONEER VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**INCIDENT REPORTING FORM**

**1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:**

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

**2. Check whether you are the:** ☐ **Target of the behavior** ☐ **Reporter (not the target)**

**3. Check whether you are a:** ☐ **Student/Grade** \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ **Parent** \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Staff member (specify role)** \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ **Other (specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your contact information/telephone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**4. Information about the Incident:**

**Name of Alleged Target (of behavior):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Alleged Aggressor** (Person who engaged in the behavior): \_\_\_\_\_

**Date(s) of Incident(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time When Incident(s) Occurred:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Incident(s)** (Be as specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

---

**5. Witnesses** (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Student ☐ Staff ☐ Other

---

**6. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.**

**7. Evidence of Alleged Harassment (i.e. letters, photos, etc.)**

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**8. Have you told an adult in the building?** ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** **Name(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**If yes, explain (what, when, where)** **45**

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**9. Signature of Person Filing this Report:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

**10: Form Given to:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Received:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix E**

### **PIONEER VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SEXUAL HARASSMENT , BULLYING & HAZING POLICY**

#### **I. Policy**

- A. It is the policy of the Pioneer Valley Regional School District to provide a learning and working atmosphere for students, employees and visitors free from sexual harassment, bullying, hazing, and intimidation. These terms are referenced herein as “harassment”. Such action may occur on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability, or for any other reason.
- B. It is a violation of this policy for any administrator, teacher or other employee, or any student to engage in or condone harassment in school or to fail to report or otherwise take reasonable corrective measures when they become aware of an incident of harassment.
- C. This policy is not designed or intended to limit the school's authority to take disciplinary action or take remedial action when such harassment occurs out of school but has a nexus to school, or is disruptive to an employee's or student's work or participation in school related activities. Reports of cyber bullying by electronic or other means, occurring in or out of school will be reviewed and, when a nexus to work or school exists, will result in discipline.
- D. It is the responsibility of every employee, student and parent to recognize acts of harassment and take every action necessary to ensure that the applicable policies and procedures of this school district are implemented.
- E. Any employee or student who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment has the right to file a complaint and to receive prompt and appropriate handling of the complaint. Further, all reasonable efforts shall be made to maintain the confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of this policy may require disclosure of any or all information received.
- F. The Building Principal/Designee shall be responsible for assisting employees and students seeking guidance or support in addressing matters relating to any form of harassment.

## II. Procedures

### A. Definitions – Sexual Harassment Prohibited

“Sexual Harassment” means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal, written, electronically transmitted, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including but not limited to unwelcome comments, touching, written notes, pictures/cartoons or other inappropriate conduct, such as leering, whistling, brushing up against the body, commenting on sexual activity or body parts or other activity referred to by the Model MCAD policy prohibiting such behavior. Harassment has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or learning environment that takes place under any of the following circumstances:

1. When submission to such conduct is made, explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment, instruction, or participation in school activities or programs;
2. When submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used by the offender as the basis for making personal or academic decisions affecting the individual subjected to sexual advances;
3. When such conduct has the effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work, attendance at school or participation in academic or curricular activities, or
4. When such conduct has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or learning environment.

### B. Definitions – Bullying Prohibited

Bullying may take a variety of forms. It is unacceptable in a school or work environment. As a result no student or employee shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber bullying in any public educational institute:

1. “Bullying and cyber bullying,” means severe or repeated unwelcome written, electronic, verbal or physical acts or gestures where a student or employee feels coerced, intimidated, harassed or threatened and under the circumstances (1) may cause a reasonable person to suffer physical or emotional harm, (2) may cause damage to another student’s or employee’s

property, or (3) may cause a disruptive or hostile school environment. The behavior must interfere with an employee's ability to perform his or her duties or with a student's academic performance or ability to learn, or interfere with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from services, activities, or privileges:

- a. That are being offered through the school district; or
  - b. During any education program or activity; or
  - c. While in school, on school equipment or property, in school vehicles, on school buses, at designated school bus stops, at school-sponsored activities, at school-sanctioned events; or
2. Through the use of data, telephone or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of any public education institute.
  3. As used in this Section, "electronic communication" means any communication through an electronic device including a telephone, cellular phone, computer or pager.

C. Definitions – Hazing Prohibited

The term "hazing" shall mean any conduct or method of initiation, even if consented to, into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person.

1. Such conduct shall include, but is not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.
2. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing and is at the scene of such activity, shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such activity to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable.

Whoever fails to report such behavior shall be subject to discipline.

D. Guidelines for Investigating Harassment Claims

In school systems, harassment may take many forms and cross many lines. The situation may be an instance of staff member to staff member, staff member to student, student to staff member, or student to student. Guidelines for dealing with any report of harassment are as follows:

1. By law, harassment is defined by the victim's perception in combination with objective standards or expectations. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, in order to protect the rights of both parties, it is important that the victim make it clear to the harasser that the behavior is objectionable.
2. In all reports of harassment, the victim or witness should describe in writing the specifics of the complaint to ensure that the subsequent investigation is focused on the relevant facts. Oral and anonymous complaints will be reviewed but are inherently difficult to investigate and may not be procedurally fair; as a result no disciplinary action shall be taken on anonymous complaints unless verified by clear and convincing evidence. All other complaints will be reviewed based on a preponderance of evidence standard.
3. Any school employee or community member that has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of harassment, bullying, or intimidation shall immediately report it to the administration; each school shall document any prohibited incident that is reported and confirmed, and report all incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber bullying and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals, to the Superintendent's office as they occur.
4. A good faith report from a staff member renders the staff member immune from discipline for making a report and is considered to have been made in the course of the staff member's employment for purposes of M.G.L. c. 258. As a result, the school district shall indemnify staff members from any cause of action arising out of a good faith report of harassment or the district's subsequent actions or inaction in connection thereto.

5. If an instance of student to student harassment is reported to a staff member other than an administrator, the staff member must inform the Assistant Principal or the Building Principal.
6. If a situation involving a report of staff member to student harassment is brought to the attention of any staff member, the staff member must notify the Building Principal or Superintendent immediately.
7. In a situation involving a report of student to staff member sexual harassment the staff member must notify the Building Principal or Superintendent.
8. In a situation involving a report of staff member to staff member harassment the staff member must notify the Building Principal or the Superintendent.
9. Once a report of harassment has been made, including reports of mental, emotional or physical harassment as well as threats to a person's safety or position in the school or work environment, the following course of action should be taken.
  - a. The Building Principal/designee should investigate the report through discussions with the individuals involved. In situations involving allegations against a staff member, he/she should be informed of his/her rights to have a third party present at the time of the discussion. In situations involving students the Principal/designee should engage the appropriate classroom or special subject area teacher. Parents of students alleged to have engaged in harassment may be invited to attend a meeting at which the complaint and potential resolution will be discussed. If excluded, a student disciplined for bullying will not be re-admitted to the regular school program until his or her parent(s) attend such a meeting. It is important that the situation be resolved as confidentially and as quickly as the circumstances permit.
  - b. If the harasser and the victim are willing to discuss the matter at a resolution meeting in the presence of the Principal/designee or Superintendent, a supportive faculty member and/or parent may be included in the discussion. During this discussion, the offending behavior should be described by the victim and administration, a

request for a change in behavior should be made, and a promise should be made that the described behavior will stop. If circumstances do not permit a face to face meeting the administration will present the victim's position. Follow-up verification procedures will be explained. Failure to comply after a resolution meeting will result in appropriate discipline.

10. If after a resolution meeting with the involved parties, the Building Principal determines that further disciplinary action must be taken, the following could occur:
  - a. In instances involving student to student or student to staff member harassment, the student may be subject to discipline including but not limited to counseling, suspension, and in appropriate cases expulsion.
  - b. In instances involving staff member to student and staff member to staff member harassment, findings will be reported to the Superintendent of Schools for further action. Personnel action may also be initiated at this point, consistent with the applicable law and collective bargaining agreement.
  - c. In all cases a referral to law enforcement will be considered by the Principal or Superintendent based on the circumstances. School officials will coordinate with the Police Department to identify a police liaison for harassment cases.

11. Retaliation:

Retaliation in any form against any person who has made or filed a complaint relating to harassment is forbidden. If it occurs, it could be considered grounds for dismissal of staff personnel and/or removal from the educational setting for a student. A referral to law enforcement may be made.

12. Confidentiality:

Reports of harassment should be kept confidential, consistent with necessary investigation procedures, with the goal of protecting the victim and stopping the behavior.

For further information about these guidelines or help with sexual harassment problems or any other form of harassment, consult: Harassment Coordinator, Pioneer Valley R.S.D.

If the alleged harasser is responsible for conducting an investigation, the Superintendent or Committee shall designate an alternative Harassment Coordinator.



## **Appendix F**

### **DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS**

#### **Notice of Proposed Suspension**

Except in the case of an emergency removal or disciplinary offense defined under M.G.L. c. 71,

§§37H or 37H1/2 or an in-school suspension as defined by 603 CMR 53.02(6), the school shall provide the student and parent/guardian with written and oral notice of the proposed out-of-school suspension, an opportunity to be heard at hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing. Notice shall set forth in plain language:

1. the disciplinary offense;
2. the basis for the charge;
3. the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
4. 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/guardian to attend the hearing;
5. the date, time, and location of the hearing;
6. the right of the student and student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

The principal/ assistant principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian verbally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. In order to conduct a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. Reasonable effort is presumed if the principal sent written notice and documented at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency situations.

All written communications regarding notice of proposed suspension shall be either by hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

#### **Short-Term Suspensions: Hearing and Principal Determination**

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive days or less. Out-of-school short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

**Principal Hearing.** 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 has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal will make a determination whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequence. The principal will provide notification in writing of his/her determination in the form of an update to the student and parent/guardian, and provide reasons for the determination. If the student is suspended, the principal shall inform the parent/guardian of the type and duration of the suspension, and shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up assignments and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

**There is no appeal process for short-term suspensions.**

### **Long-Term Suspensions: Hearing and Principal Determination**

A long-term suspension is 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. 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 has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

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;

- i. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and or parent's/guardian's expense;
- ii. 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; and
- iii. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- iv. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request.

Based on the evidence submitted at the hearing the principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension (the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports) what remedy or consequence will be imposed. If the principal decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:

- i. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
- ii. Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
- iii. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
- iv. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make academic progress during removal, and the contact information of a school member who can provide more detailed information.
- v. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or his/her designee (only if a long-term suspension has been imposed) within five (5) calendar days, which may be extended by parent/guardian request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides

to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through grade 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or by other means of communication where appropriate.

The principal shall provide the parent/guardian, 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.

### **Appeal of Long-Term Suspension**

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent if properly and timely filed. A good faith effort shall be made to include the parent/guardian at the hearing. The appeal shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the superintendent shall grant.

The student and parent/guardian shall have the same rights afforded at the long-term suspension principal hearing. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the superintendent shall issue his/her written decision which meets the criteria required of the principal's determination. If the superintendent determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the principal. The superintendent's decision shall be final.

### **Emergency Removal**

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing 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 temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal.

During the emergency removal, the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts

to verbally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The principal shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing, which meets the due process requirements of a long-term suspension within the two (2) school days time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent/guardian. The student may not be removed from school until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

A decision shall be rendered verbally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day. The decision shall meet all of the due process requirements of a principal's determination in a long-term suspension.

### **In-School Suspension Under 603 CMR 53:02(6) & 603 CMR 53.10**

In-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not the school premises, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions over the course of the school year.

The principal may use in-school suspension as an alternative to short-term suspension for disciplinary offenses. A Principal may impose an in-school suspension as defined above according to the following procedures:

The principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed ten (10) days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

The principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school

suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth above, if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand- delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent. The principals use of in-school suspension as an alternative to short-term suspension.

### **Suspension or Expulsion for Disciplinary Offenses Under M.G.L. 71 §§37H and 37H112**

1. The due process procedures above do not apply to a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) an 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 the 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 M.G.L. c.71, §§37H or 37H112.
2. The principal will inform the student of the specific charges in writing, informing the student of the right to be represented by counsel (at the student's expense) and the right to provide evidence and question witnesses, on the proposed hearing date.
3. The student may appeal the principal's expulsion determination to the superintendent of schools within ten (10) days of notification of the expulsion.
4. The superintendent may uphold, reduce, or reverse the disciplinary action after the appeal hearing. Note that a failure to make an appeal to the superintendent within the ten (10) day period will exhaust any further right of appeal.
5. All students who have been suspended or expelled who remain residents of the District shall have an opportunity to make academic progress during their period of suspension, expulsion, or removal from regular classroom activities.
6. If the superintendent upholds the expulsion decision, if the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan.

## Appendix G

Approved at 11/17/16 PVRSDC Mtg.

### **DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS UNDER SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SECTION 504**

The discipline of students with disabilities eligible for special education and students on Section 504 Accommodation Plans is governed by federal and state special education laws and the regulations promulgated there under. These laws include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, its implementing regulations 34 C.F.R. et seq.; and Massachusetts General Laws, chapter 71 B and its implementing regulations 603 C.M.R. 28.00. Students with disabilities who violate school rules are subject to removal from their current educational placement for up to ten (10) school days per year, to the extent that such a removal would be applied to students without disabilities, without a prior determination as to whether the misconduct is related to the student's disability. The student's IEP or 504 team must meet within ten (10) days of the decision to suspend to review all relevant information in the student's file.

Anytime school personnel seek to remove a student from his or her current educational placement for more than ten (10) days in any school year, this constitutes a 'change in placement.' This includes both in school and out of school suspensions. A change in placement invokes certain procedural protections under the IDEA, the federal special education law.

These include, but are not limited to:

A. If the school did not conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such a student before the behavior that resulted in the discipline, the school shall convene an IEP meeting to develop an assessment plan to address the behavior, or if the child already has a behavior intervention plan, the IEP Team shall review the plan and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior.

B. A review by the IEP Team of the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action, which is often referred to as the Manifestation Determination. School personnel may order a change in educational placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) that provides the student with a free appropriate public education for the same amount of time that a child without a disability would be subject to discipline, but not for more than forty-five (45) calendar days if the student:

1. Carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function.

2. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs at school, a school function, or school sponsored event; or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school, a school function, or a school sponsored event.

School Personnel may also seek an order from the department of Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA), using the authority of the hearing officer, placing a student in an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) calendar days, when it is determined that the student is “substantially likely” to injure him/herself or others. Parents/guardians and/or students, where appropriate, may request a hearing at the Bureau of Special Education Appeals regarding a disciplinary action described above to challenge the Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) or the manifestation determination. For a copy of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education brochure on Special Education Parents’ Rights available in many languages visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/> or contact the administrator of Special Education at (413)498-2911.



## Appendix H

### **PIONEER VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT** **ADA GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

This grievance procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination in employment practices and policies of the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the Pioneer Valley Regional School District.

The complaint should be in writing or on audiotape and contain information about the alleged discrimination including name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interview, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

The grievant and/or his/her designee should submit the complaint as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

**CHRIS MAGUIRE, ADMINISTRATOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION  
PIONEER VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
97 F. SUMNER TURNER ROAD  
NORTHFIELD, MA 01360**

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the ADA Coordinator will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the ADA Coordinator will respond in writing and, where appropriate, in a format accessible (e.g. large print, Braille, audiotape) to the complainant. The response will explain the position of the Pioneer Valley Regional School District and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by the ADA Coordinator does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his/her designee may appeal the decision of the ADA Coordinator within 15 days after receipt of the response to the Superintendent of Schools.

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Superintendent will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting the Superintendent will respond in writing in a format accessible to the complainant with a final resolution of the complaint.

Individuals always have the legal right to file a complaint independent of the grievance procedure with an appropriate agency if they so choose.

**Northfield Elementary School**

***A PACK WITH PRIDE***



***Where Small Paws Make Big Impressions***

*School Colors: Silver and Blue*