

If you need the Houghton Handbook translated, please contact the main office of your child's school.

Portuguese/Português

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

Spanish/ Español

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

French/ Français

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

German/ Deutsch

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

Russian/Русско

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

자녀의 학교에 주요 사무실에
당신과 번역이 책자가 필요하면

당신과 번역이 책자가
필요하면,

자녀의 학교의 주요
사무실에

문의하
시기

바랍니다
요.

Chinese/汉语

如果您需要这本小册子被翻译, 请与您的儿童的学校大会办公处联系。

Japanese/日本語

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

Hindi/hindi

Agar Aapko yah puistka ki Anauvaaidt AavaSyakta ho - tba kRipya Apne bacha ko ivaValaya ka mau#ya kaha-laya sampk- kiryao .

Polish/Polski

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

Greek

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

Italian/Italia

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

Arabic

المكتب رئيسية من طفلك مدرسة. اتصل ب إن أنت تحتاج هذا كراس يترجم.

HOUGHTON MISSION STATEMENT

Houghton Elementary is a child-centered school. Our commitment is to provide challenging and creative learning experiences that enable children to build both a strong academic and social foundation. Our school offers a safe, supportive environment where children care to learn and learn to care.

School office hours during regular school days are from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Telephone numbers are:

School Office	978-422-2333	Health Office	978-422-2303
FAX	978-422-2301	Absence/Late	978-422-6771 PRESS 1 Houghton , PRESS 2 Chocksett
District Office	508-829-1670		

Office Staff: Anthony M. Cipro, Jr., Principal
Trish O'Donnell, Assistant Principal ,
Tiffany Hernandez, Administrative Secretary
Bertha Josiah-Ogbomo, Nurse

Houghton Website: <https://houghton.wrsd.net/>

AA Transportation Co., Inc. 774-234-0678 Special Education Transportation, Village Transportation 978-422-6808
Emergency Line: 978-870-6655. Please call for all bussing related information and/or concerns.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Note: Religious holidays are identified on the calendar when they fall on school days which may affect scheduled standardized testing (WRSD Policy #3240).

SCHOOL HOURS AND TRANSPORTATION

Grades K-4 (full day):

9:05 am – 9:10 am Arrival times 9:05-9:15am

9:15 am - 3:45 pm **School hours 9:15am-3:45pm**

12:45 pm Dismissal on all early release days. (Lunch is served on most early release days. Please check monthly lunch menu)

Child Transportation

WRSD Policy P6562

ALTERNATE STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

It shall be expected that bus students will go to and from school by the same means on a daily basis. A parent may choose an alternate mode of transportation over which the school system has no authority. Therefore, a choice to use an alternative form of transportation other than the school bus shall be at the risk of the parent and the student.

K-4 students will be required to present a written permission notice to the school from parent/guardian when using alternate means of transportation.

In case of emergencies, oral notification will be an acceptable alternative with the administration making a written record of the notification.

Child Drop-Off by Parent/Guardian:

Supervision of children by staff does not begin until 9:05 am. Children must not be left off at school prior to that time. Children are to be dropped off at the doorway next to the side parking lot. Please note that the driveway in front of the school is for buses only.

USE OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC PLAYERS, ELECTRONIC GAMES, ETC.

Personal cell phones, stereos/radios, CD/MP3 players, IPODS, hand-held video games are **not** permitted on the bus nor in school. These devices can disrupt the educational process. Exceptions may occur when the devices in question are used for classroom activities and/or when Administrative approval is obtained. Any electronic devices confiscated are given to the Principal for safe-keeping. A parent is the only one who can retrieve a confiscated device from the office.

Laser pointers are NOT allowed in school and will be confiscated. Such pointers can be used inappropriately and can lead to personal injury. Use of laser pointers will be considered a violation of the District's weapons policy

BUS DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES AND CONSEQUENCES

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

LEVEL 1

<u>Misbehaviors</u>	<u>Consequences</u>
<p>Misbehaviors that interfere with the orderly transportation of students. Some examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Talking too loudly● Failure to stay seated● Littering on the bus● Tampering with the possessions of other passengers	<p>The bus driver may address the misbehavior:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Verbal warning issued to student● Assign seats

LEVEL 2

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

LEVEL 3

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

Procedures for reporting passenger misconduct

The bus driver will report misconduct occurring on the school bus to the school **Administration**. If a student shares information pertaining to student misconduct on the bus with a teacher or other staff member, the **Administration** will be notified and will **speak with the bus driver**.

1. A School Bus Conduct Report will be completed and submitted to the school **Administration** and the bus company.
2. The Principal or designee and the bus company will retain copies of the signed report.

TRANSPORTATION, SAFETY AND SECURITY PROCEDURES

The Wachusett Regional School District and its staff share, with students and parents, the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing District requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal.

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

1. Children will be instructed as to the proper procedure for boarding and exiting from a school bus and in proper and safe conduct while aboard.
2. Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted at least twice a year to acquaint student riders with procedures in emergency situations.
3. All vehicles contracted by the Wachusett Regional School District to transport children will be inspected periodically for conformance with state and federal safety requirements.
4. Classroom instruction on school bus safety will be provided.

Your child's safety is of utmost importance to us. To ensure the safest possible ride, the transportation company and the school ask that your child know and adhere to the following school bus practices:

- (1) The driver is in full charge of the bus; children must remain seated at all times unless disembarking from the bus.
- (2) Children must not stand in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- (3) Children may be assigned specific seats on the bus.
- (4) Children may not extend arms or heads out of the windows at any time.
- (5) Any damage done to the bus by a child must be paid for by his/her parents/guardians.
- (6) Conversation on the bus must not be loud or boisterous.
- (7) All children should treat peers with courtesy.
- (8) If a child must cross a roadway, he/she must do so in front of the bus after the driver has signaled that it is safe.
- (9) Children should not throw objects or litter on the bus or out of the bus.
- (10) Children are not allowed to bring animals on the bus.

If a child is found to be guilty of continuous misconduct or a serious act of misconduct, riding privileges may be denied. In such an event, the parent/guardian is responsible for transporting the child to and from school. Notification to the parent/guardian will be by an administrator and will not be put into effect until parents have been so notified (see WRSD policy #P7340).

ATTENDANCE

Absences and Tardiness

Parents/guardians are asked to call the special school number, 978-422-6771 PRESS 1, if their child will be absent or late. There is a telephone answering service to record your child's reported absence at that number from 4:30 p.m. on the previous day to 8:30 am on the day of the absence.

If your child will be late, please call the same number and indicate that he/she will be late, not absent.

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

When absent, children are responsible for making up the work they have missed within a reasonable time frame as determined by their teacher and for seeking extra help if they feel they need it. The school has the right to request that children who are absent more than 10 days in a marking period bring a doctor's note for each subsequent absence.

Children who are tardy must be brought to the office by a parent/guardian to be signed in before going to their classrooms.

Foreseen Absences

Foreseen absences, e.g., family vacations during the school year, place a burden on the child, the teacher, and other children. For this reason, they should be planned to coincide with regularly scheduled vacation times.

We do recognize, however, that there may be circumstances that make it necessary for you to take your child out of school. In such cases, parents/guardians will submit a note to the child's teacher stating the date(s) of the absence and the reason for the absence.

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES WRSDC P6312 REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance is essential to the achievement of students in the Wachusett Regional School District. In accordance with Massachusetts State Law, Parent(s)/Guardian has the responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

If the school does not receive a message from the parent/guardian by the designated time established by the school, then the school shall call to inquire about the student's absence. Parents will be contacted within three (3) days of the student's absence if the Parent(s) or Guardian has not contacted the school regarding the absence.

The Parent(s)/Guardian will also be notified when a student has at least five days in which the student has missed two or more classes/periods (unexcused) or who has five or more unexcused absences in the school year. A meeting will be scheduled with the building Principal (or his/her designee), the Parent (s)/Guardian and the student to develop an action plan to improve the student's attendance.

Legal Refs: Chapter 222 of the Acts of 2012, Chapter 76. Section I B First Reading: 09/12/91 Second Reading: 09/26/94
Amendment First Read: 11/10/14 Amendment Second Read: 11/24/14 WRSDC Policy 6312

Student Absence Notification Program

At the commencement of each school year, parents/guardians will be sent a notice instructing them to call a designated telephone number at a designated time to inform the school of the student's absence and the reason for such absence. The notice will also require such parent or guardian to furnish the school with a home, work, or other emergency telephone number where they can be contacted during the school day. If the school does not receive a message from the parent/guardian by the designated time, then the school shall call the telephone number or numbers furnished to inquire about the student's absence. Parents will be contacted within three (3) days of the student's absence if the Parent(s) or Guardian has not contacted the school regarding the absence.

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Parent(s) or Guardians will also be notified when a student who has at least five days in which the student has missed two or more classes/periods (unexcused) or who has five or more unexcused absences in the school year and a meeting will be scheduled with the building Principal (or his/her designee), the Parent(s)/Guardian and the student to develop an action plan to improve the student's attendance.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact school staff and work collaboratively with them to correct the reasons that the student is missing school.

Excused Absence/Tardy includes:

- Documented illness or injury
- Bereavement/family funeral
- Major religious observances
- Court
- Extraordinary family circumstances (excused at the discretion of the Principal)

An Unexcused Absence/Tardy is not covered by the aforementioned definition. Examples of an unexcused absence may include, but may not be limited to:

- Any illness over three consecutive days not documented by a physician or medical professional
- Truancy
- Family vacations
- Undocumented absences
- Non-emergency family situation

Family Vacations

Parents and students are reminded that Massachusetts Law requires compulsory attendance for students. We strongly discourage family vacations when school is in session. In addition to compromising the attendance law, family vacations interrupt the educational process of each course in ways that makeup work cannot reverse. Teachers are not required to give out homework assignments prior to a family vacation.

Attendance Policy

A meeting will be scheduled with the building Principal (or his/her designee), the Parent(s)/Guardian and the student to develop an action plan to improve the student's attendance if a student has accrued any of the following:

- Five (5) or more unexcused absences in the school year
- Five (5) or more days tardy (unexcused)
- Two (2) or more classes/periods (unexcused)

Chronic absenteeism may lead to academic failure for the year.

Make-Up Work

If a student is absent for a prolonged period of time, he/she will be given an appropriate amount of time to make up the missed work. Parents may request and pick-up work from the office on the third consecutive day of a child's absence. Homework requests must be made when calling the sick line, 978-422-6771 Press 1, and requests need to be made prior to 8:30 A.M.

Teachers do not provide school work for children whose families take vacations when school is in session.

Unless other arrangements are made with the teacher, each child will be required to submit these work assignments

within one week of his/her return to school. The parent/guardian must also keep in mind that the teacher cannot be held responsible for providing the child with individual instruction on all the material covered during the absence.

School Enrollment of Children

Parents/guardians of student residents within the Wachusett Regional School District who wish to have their child attend a school other than the one assigned by the District, may request another school through a written request to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services. The parent/guardian must assume any transportation burden unless required by law or when a unique circumstance exists as determined by the Superintendent.

Dismissals

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

Children will be dismissed to the office from class at the requested time but will not be allowed to leave the building unless accompanied by the designated adult.

Children will not be allowed to go home with another child without a note from the parent. In addition, no child is allowed to change busses to go home with another child. However, if a child is riding his regular bus home and getting off at a different stop, the parent/guardian must send in a note specifying where their child will be getting off. The note will be turned into the teacher and the office will issue a Bus Permission Slip for the child to give the bus driver. Children without a note will return home in accordance with their regular routine.

Children will not be allowed to go home with another child without a note from the parent. In addition, no child is allowed to change busses to go home with another child. However, if a child is riding his regular bus home and getting off at a different stop, the parent/guardian must send in a note specifying where their child will be getting off. The note will be turned into the teacher and the office will issue a Bus Permission Slip for the child to give the bus driver. Children without a note will return home in accordance with their regular routine.

Parents who pick their children up on a regular basis at the end of school dismissal (ie: Tuesday and Thursday each week) are requested to submit a note each week. Parents who pick up children on occasion at the end of school dismissal (ie: doctor appointment) are requested to submit a note on the day of pickup. Notes must contain the name of the person who is picking up the child. We require any non-parents who occasionally pick up children at the end of the school day, even when a note is provided, to pick up children in the office. This includes older siblings, other relatives and neighbors. We will only release a child to the person(s) identified in the written note. These practices are in place to help ensure that children and parents get to their appropriate designations in a safe and timely fashion.

Early Dismissal during the School Day

Should an emergency develop during the school day, children might be sent home earlier than usual.

This decision will be announced by the area radio and television stations and School Messenger. If possible, school lunch will be served prior to dismissal.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD DISCUSS AND MAKE ADVANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT WHAT TO DO AND WHERE TO GO IN THE EVENT OF AN EARLY DISMISSAL IF THERE IS NO ONE AT HOME.

No School and Delayed Opening Announcements

The Wachusett Regional School District has the ability to contact families of all students using the capabilities of School Messenger. In the event school is canceled because of weather conditions, a telephone call to parents will be activated at 5:30 AM. Space was provided on student information forms for parents to request NOT to be called regarding school cancellations.

In the event of school closings or delayed openings, announcements will be made on the following media:

Channel 4 WBZ	AM 1280 – WEIM	FM 96.1 - WSRS
Channel 5 – WCVB	AM580 - WTAG	FM 104.5 - WXLO
Channel 7 – WHDH	AM 830 - WCRN	
Channel 56 – WLVI	AM 1280 - WEIM	
Fox 25 - WFXT	AM1319 - WORC	

School closings or delayed openings will also be posted on the District website, www.wrsd.net.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Houghton School is a child-centered school and each child is special. We continue to choose to take a short time within the school day to provide a few minutes of recognition for each child's birthday. The number of children with food allergies and diabetes continues to increase. The accommodations needing to be made by our school staff has become extremely challenging. Therefore, parents are not to send cupcakes or other foods to school for birthday celebrations. Parents who wish to have further acknowledgment of a child's birthday, beyond the daily morning school announcements, may provide a gift to the classroom (book for the classroom or school library, games/activity, etc.)

Lunch Program/School Activity Notices

Lunch is provided throughout the school year. The cost is \$3.25 (subject to change) and includes a carton of milk. Children wishing to purchase additional milk with their lunch may do so for \$.60 per carton. Children bringing their own lunch may also purchase milk

Children purchasing lunch may utilize the myschoolbucks.com link at www.wrsd.net which allows for prepayment of lunches. If you choose not to take advantage of the online prepayment service you may continue to make advance payments via check, which should be made payable to the Wachusett Regional Cafeteria – Sterling. Please write your child's full name on the check.

Even if you are not interested in the prepay option, set up the account and you will have the ability to view transactions and balances. The system will also give you a low balance alert.

The responsibility of remembering to bring lunch/milk money is on the parent/guardian and the child. However, children will not be denied lunch due to lack of money. If a lunch is given to a child who has no money, an IOU will be sent home showing the charge. Parents are expected to pay for lunches that are charged once notified by the cafeteria manager

Snack Program

Children bring their own snacks from home for snack times. Children may purchase milk for snack period. Snack milk is paid for by the month. The amount will change each month and the amount will be listed on the lunch menu sent home each month. Checks should be made out to Wachusett Regional Cafeteria-Sterling. Parents/guardians should impress upon their child that snack time is not a substitute for lunch.

Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program

Applications for the free or reduced lunch program are sent home with each child at the beginning of the school year. If at any time during the school year a parent/guardian feels their child may be eligible to participate in this program, applications may be obtained at the school office.

HOME –SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

Parent-Teacher Conferences

A parent/guardian may request a teacher conference at any time of the school year. Please contact the teacher(s) to arrange for a

Report Cards

Report cards will be issued for Kindergarten, Grade 1 & Grade 2 three times per year. The first quarter report card is a Parent-Teacher conference. Report cards will be issued four times during the school year for grades 3 and 4. Report

card formats vary at different grade levels.

Policy Relating to Pupil Services Policy 6260
Assignment of Students to Classes

The Wachusett District School Committee supports an academic environment that promotes student success as the primary focus. The classroom shall provide an academic culture so that a student has the opportunity to achieve his/her highest potential.

The Wachusett Regional School District shall make every effort to ensure that the composition of classes is balanced to maximize instructional opportunities and meet individual student needs. Considerations may include the following: gender, achievement levels, equitable distribution of ability groups to reflect an inclusive school, class size, special education needs, students' social and emotional needs, learning styles, level of independence, student behavioral issues, and interaction abilities. The District's goal is to establish classes that will enhance the dynamics of the classroom by bringing students together who will work as a learning team, and challenge and complement one another.

The Wachusett Regional School District shall support appreciation for diversity and shall promote among students respect, tolerance, and understanding for others. The classroom provides students an opportunity to engage with one another and to develop responsible social behaviors necessary for an educated citizenry.

Parents may give input to the building administrator regarding the placement of their children. Such input should be submitted by a specified date. While the Administration provides an opportunity for parental input in the decision affecting a student's assignment to a class or course, the Principal shall make the final assignment decision to a class or course in keeping with the above stated District goals. Parental requests for specific teachers, however, shall not be considered in the decision-making process.

Parents/guardians and teachers are encouraged to communicate with each other at any time they may have questions concerning their child at a mutually convenient time.

After School Help

Children wishing to remain after school for additional help must make arrangements with the teacher(s) at least one day in advance. The parent must provide the school with written permission for the child to stay and assumes the responsibility for providing the child with transportation home.

Student Transfer

Please inform the Houghton School office if you are moving and advise the school of the last day your child will attend school. The school will also need your new address and the name and address of the new school your child will be attending.

Certain release forms must be signed by the parent (usually upon enrollment at new school) for records to be forwarded to the new school. A transfer form might be required for the new school. A child's records will be sent to the new school upon request and will not be given to parents for transit to the new school.

Emergency Information Cards

The school maintains a file of emergency information cards should a parent need to be contacted during the school day. It is essential that this information be kept up to date. Please contact the school in the case of any changes.

WRSDC Policy P6616

HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

Insurance

The Wachusett Regional School District shall require each student participating in intramural programs and/or athletic teams to provide evidence of an active Accident Insurance policy covering the student.

Health Services

Students who become ill or injured will be directed to the school nurse(s) for assessment, evaluation, treatment and/or

referral. If the nurse is not available, students are to report to the office. Students are not to leave the building without authorization. Parents will be notified when a child must be sent home. If the parent cannot be contacted, the person indicated on the Emergency Card will be called. It is imperative that the Emergency Card be completed annually and updated as necessary.

Physical Examinations

Massachusetts requires that a physical examination by a healthcare provider be on file with the nurse for kindergarten entry and every four years thereafter (grades 4 and 8). Students entering the District without records or recent physical must have a physical examination within the 1st year. A physical exam is also required prior to tryouts for competitive athletics or cheerleading.

Mandated Screening Programs

Students in grades 1, 4, 7 & 10 have BMI checked and students in grades K - 12 are tested for vision and hearing. Students in grades 5-8 and 9 receive an annual postural screening for scoliosis. The screening is done by the school nurse with assistance from the Physical Education staff. Parents will be notified if screening procedures identify possible problems.

Contagious Conditions

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

Immunizations

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

Medication Administration

Medication, prescription and non-prescription, must be by written order of the provider with written permission from the parent/guardian before medication may be administered by the nurse. Medication must be brought to the school by the parent/guardian or other designated responsible adult in the original container with the label intact. Students are not to transport medication to and from school. However, in the case of self-medicating students, students may transport and self-administer upon completion of a written agreement between the parent and the nurse. R5/28/03

Exclusion from School Activities for Health Reasons

All children are expected to participate in all school-related activities. Temporary exclusion will be allowed upon written request from the parent/guardian. Permanent exclusion requires written notification from a physician.

Accident Insurance

The Wachusett Regional School District sponsors a student insurance plan. Brochures, which describe the various plans, are distributed to all children during the first week of school.

Fire and School Evacuation Drills

Evacuation drills are conducted as required by state regulations to ensure the safety of all persons in the event of an emergency. Children are instructed in, and must comply with, the procedures established for safe evacuation of and return to the school building.

School Bus Evacuation Drills

In compliance with state regulations, school staff assists the school bus contractor in conducting school bus evacuation drills twice each school year. Generally, these drills take place during early morning in front of the school. In addition, all schools within WRSD conduct shelter in place and weather drills.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Physical Education

Physical education is a regular part of the school program and all children are required to participate (see Exclusion from School Activities for Health Reasons). Unless directed otherwise by the physical education teacher, sneakers are required of all children participating in the program.

Recess

We consider recess to be an integral part of the school day. All children have the opportunity to participate during outdoor recess unless they have a doctor's note requesting that their child remain indoors. If it is determined by the Principal or designee that the weather is inclement, recess will be held indoors. Parents are expected to dress children appropriately for outdoor recess.

Kindergarten Entrance Requirements

A child must be five years of age by August 31st to enter kindergarten

Registration (starts around the beginning of February) and a parent/guardian orientation (usually held in Mid May) are conducted during the school year preceding the child's entrance to the program. Parents may pick up the registration packet at Houghton School, have one sent home with a current Houghton student or download it from www.wrsd.net. When submitting the registration packet to the school, the parent/guardian must bring a notarized birth certificate, a record of immunizations, recent physical and completed registration forms. Please drop off your registration forms at Houghton School. The school should be informed of any handicaps or other concerns at this time.

Kindergarten Screening will be conducted in mid to late June. Children will be screened for gross and fine motor development, speech and language development and general concept development. All screening results will be shared with the parent/guardian in the fall.

HOMEWORK

Homework can fulfill both an academic and life skill purpose by:

- * Reinforcing classroom learning
- * Promoting individual responsibility, initiative, and motivation
- * Teaching organizational skills and time management

Focus areas for Homework assignments:

Literacy: (phonics, sight words, fluency, comprehension, written language)

Reading or any of its components may be assigned as homework. The benefits of reading cannot be overstated. Independent reading by a child or being read to at home are activities that are encouraged by Houghton School staff. These promote an enjoyment of reading, increase vocabulary development, improve comprehension and numerous other reading skills.

Math: (number sense, basic concepts, math facts)

Science and Social Studies: Unit topics vary by grade. Both subjects may incorporate both reading and writing. Unit projects can be over a period of one to four weeks and may warrant parental assistance.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten teachers may assign home activities to reinforce or enrich learning. Kindergarten parents are encouraged to read to their children from childhood classics and/or from books suggested by the classroom teacher.

Children in Grades 1-4

Homework may be assigned that follows the Houghton School's "Rule of Ten."

Listed below are the time guidelines teachers will follow for nightly homework assignments:

Grade One	10 minutes
Grade Two	20 minutes
Grade Three & Four	30 minutes

Time estimates for assignments are made by the teacher with the understanding that assignments may take more or less time for individual children. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher if they observe their child consistently experiencing difficulty completing assignments within grade guidelines. Frequency of homework assignments are determined by the teacher. There will be no assignments on weekends, snow days, or school vacations.

Wachusett Regional School District Policy #3611.4 Policy Relating to Education Enrichment

The Wachusett Regional School Committee is committed to providing a high quality education for all students with the goal of maximizing the performance and achievement of every individual. Staff is encouraged and expected to use innovative teaching implementing the district curriculum in creative and flexible ways. It is recognized that students possess a broad range of intellectual skills and creative talents that can be challenged by diverse and stimulating activities.

Wachusett Regional School District shall:

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

This policy shall be referenced in each school's student handbook. In addition, School Councils shall annually review the needs of gifted and talented students.

Road Trips

The school promotes enrichment programs that take place on site. However, there may be an occasion where a road trip is planned by a grade. These trips are planned in conjunction with an area of study and are usually bus trips. A description of the details of the trip will be sent home by the teacher(s). Permission slips are sent home and must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian for a child to be able to participate.

Some or all of the costs associated with the trip may be the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Should this pose an economic hardship, the parent/guardian is urged to discuss the matter with the child's teacher.

Information Regarding Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

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

Further information may be obtained from **the** school Principal, Designee, or the District's Section 504 Coordinator.

Special Education

Child Find

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

School, 1745 Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522
(508-829-1670 x237).

Special Needs Resource Program

The special education program provides supportive services for children who need individual and or small group instruction in order to make effective progress in the regular education program. In some cases, the services may take place in a regular classroom setting and in compliance with Chapter 766 regulations. Under no circumstances will a child be placed in a program involving scheduled periods of special education services without parental written consent.

Along with specially designed instruction, the special education teachers are responsible for evaluations of children suspected of having special education needs. If warranted, an individualized educational program (IEP) is developed and implemented following signed approval by the parent/guardian.

Speech and Language Resource Program

Children with special needs in the area of speech and language receive therapy from a certified therapist. Participation in this program requires a formal evaluation and an individual education plan (IEP).

Home Tutoring

Home tutoring is available for extended absences due to illness and/or injury. Arrangements can be made for this service by contacting the Director of Pupil Services at (508) 829-1670.

Preschool Screening

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

OTHER INFORMATION

Use of School Telephone

If deemed a matter of importance by the teacher or other staff member, children will be permitted to use the telephone. Children will not be allowed to use the phone to make arrangements for after school activities. All personal long distance calls must be made collect or charged to the child's home phone. Except in an emergency, children will not be called to the phone; the office staff will deliver any messages.

Acceptable Computer Use Regulations for WRSD Students

The purpose of the WRSD network and the internet is to enhance educational research. Use of these media is limited to educational purposes determined by the district. Access to the internet enables children to explore thousands of libraries, databases and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with internet users throughout the world. Families should be warned that some material accessible via the internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate and/or potentially offensive to some people.

While the district's intent is to make internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, children may find ways to access other materials as well. It is the district's position that the benefits to children in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed the potential disadvantages

WRSDC Policy P6531.1A

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES SOCIAL MEDIA

Section I: Introduction

The Wachusett Regional School District recognizes that our students must learn to utilize modern online tools for social and educational collaboration. These tools, include, but are not limited to:

- Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Email, chat, and other messaging technologies
- Message boards and forums
- Blogs and collaborative websites

Section II: Goals of the Policy

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee permits the use of social media platforms that support instructional opportunities and the social/emotional development of students. The District promotes educational uses of technology,

including social media tools, along with appropriate training for students and staff on safety, proper use, and management of innovative learning tools.

Social media platforms will be used in District schools to achieve the following goals:

Educate students, staff, and parents/guardians about the concerns and benefits of social media

* Access social media during and beyond the school day for educational purposes, social/emotional development, and other

and other school acceptable uses.

- Explore ways to integrate social media with classroom teaching and learning
- Integrate student publication with authentic social media environments
- Encourage the use of technology-based interventions to support student learning
- Allow for ongoing interaction between students and teachers for appropriate school-related use
- Promote student interaction with peers, outside organizations, and professionals in a global community
- Offer and encourage student use of online resources to communicate and seek support for bullying and safety concerns

Encourage parent/guardian interaction with teachers and schools through the use of digital communications and social

media environments

WRSDC Policy P6531.1B

Section III: Guidelines for Use of Social Media Platforms

Any use of social media platforms, whether in District schools or related to District programming, will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All use of social media tools must comply with District acceptable use policies
- All staff and student online communication is subject to state and federal laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and District policies governing communication
- All staff and student online communication is subject to policies ensuring safe environments for students and staff free from bullying, harassment, and other forms of unwanted communication that threaten well-being and productivity
- Staff and District administration are encouraged to collaborate in developing social media tools
- Staff social media accounts used to communicate with current WRSD students will be established using District email accounts and will remain separate from any personal staff social media accounts.
- Educational social media accounts maintained by staff members shall not contain personal information
- District staff shall not subscribe to students' personal postings in social media platforms not controlled or monitored by the District

Photographs of Children

Children's photographs are scheduled annually to be taken in the fall (see calendar for this year's dates). Photographs are taken of all children at all grade levels; however, parents/guardians are not required to purchase the photographs. A portion of the cost of the photographs purchased is donated back to the school to help support school related activities such as the library and classroom enrichment. A parent may choose not to have their child photographed. However, this request must be in writing to the school Principal prior to picture day.

Appearance and Dress

Although the Houghton Elementary School does not have a formal dress code, all children are expected to dress in a manner which is not disruptive to the educational process of the school. The Principal/designee has the authority to make this determination.

Specific clothing may be required for certain school activities such as physical education classes. It is strongly recommended that all outerwear (coats, hats, sweaters, mittens, etc.) be marked with the child's name. Children are also expected to observe a standard of cleanliness and personal hygiene which ensures their health and safety as well as the health and safety of others.

Lost and Found

Most found articles (clothing, lunch boxes, etc.) are placed on a table in the before/after school pick up and drop off area. Valuables such as watches and money are kept in the administration office. Any found items not claimed by the end of a school quarter will be donated to local charities. Parents are urged not to have children bring large amounts of money to school and not to leave any monies or valuables in their outerwear or desks.

Care of School Property

Children are responsible for any assigned books received during the school year. They are expected to cover all books and keep them covered during the entire school year.

A parent/guardian of a child will be required to cover the cost of any item (book, equipment, supplies, etc.) **furnished to the** child by the school which will need to be replaced due to its loss or damage. This requirement shall also apply to any school property vandalized by a child.

Use of School Facilities

The facilities of the Houghton Elementary School are available for use by community and outside organizations so long as the activities do not interfere with the school program and the proposed activity is in compliance with the policy on the use of the building. A copy of the policy and registration forms for the use of the building may be obtained at the office of the Principal. The school Principal has the final decision on building usage.

SCHOOL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

School Volunteer Program/PTO

The school volunteer program consists of parents/guardians and other community members who are interested in giving of their time and talent to students and teachers. If you have an interest in this program, please contact Houghton's PTO coordinator of volunteers or the parent/teacher group's representative. Monthly meetings are open to parents and all parents are eligible to vote on issues at the monthly meetings.

School Improvement and Modernization Council (SIMCO)

SIMCO is an advisory council to the Principal and functions in compliance with the regulations established by the Massachusetts Department of Education relative to the Education Reform Act. SIMCO membership consists of parents, teachers and other interested Sterling citizens.

In its advisory capacity, SIMCO establishes subcommittees which work with the Principal and the faculty to investigate ways in which the school program might be improved. If you have an interest in this group, please contact the Principal for more information.

Monthly meetings are open to parents.

CONDUCT

The following information on bullying prevention and intervention (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O) serves as an amendment to our student handbook

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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

and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying behavior(s).

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

A. Definitions

Bullying: Bullying is unfair and one-sided. Bullying happens when someone keeps hurting, frightening, threatening or leaving someone out of activities on purpose. Bullying can happen at school or away from school. Bullying can happen face to face, behind someone's back, on-line, in a text message, repeated phone calls or a combination of each type.

Examples of bullying are: hitting or kicking; name calling or threatening or leaving friends out of activities just to hurt their feelings. Bullying that happens outside of school can lead to disciplinary action at school if a target feels unsafe at school or if school is disrupted as a result of the bullying behaviors.

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

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

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

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

Local law enforcement agency: local police department(s)

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

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

B. Policy Jurisdiction

For purposes of this policy, bullying is prohibited:

1. on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school; and
2. at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or

school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

C. Reporting Requirements

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. Contact your child's Principal or Tracy Lavengood, Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services, 508-829-1670 ext. 237, if you have questions or concerns.

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.

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

D. Investigations

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

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

Professional Development for School and District Staff:

Schools and districts must 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 of nature and internet safety (vi) as they relate to cyber-bullying.

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

WRSDC Policy P6400

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES

**P6121A, P6121B,P6121C - Student Residency
Policy**

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES STUDENT RESIDENCY POLICY The Wachusett Regional School District Committee adopts the following policy regarding the residency and enrollment of students. I. RESIDENCY (Legal Reference: M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 5)

In order to attend a school within the Wachusett Regional School District, a student must actually reside in Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, or Sterling, unless the exception (set forth in Part V below) applies. Residence, for purposes of this policy shall be defined as: The place where the student lives permanently. The permanent residence of a minor child is ordinarily presumed to be the legal residence of the child's parent or legal guardian having physical custody of the child. In determining residency, Wachusett Regional School District (WRSD) retains the right to require the production of a variety of records and documentation and to investigate where a student actually resides.

A determination that a student does not actually reside in Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, or Sterling renders the student ineligible to enroll in the WRSD or, if the student is already enrolled in the WRSD, shall result, subject only to Section V. B below, in the immediate termination of such enrollment. A parent, legal guardian, or student who has reached

the age of majority (18), who is aggrieved by a determination of residency, may appeal the determination to the Superintendent of Schools, whose decision shall be final.

II. VERIFICATION OF RESIDENCY Before any child is enrolled in the Wachusett Regional School District, his/her parent or legal guardian must provide the following required proofs of primary residency as part of the registration process. Applications cannot be processed without these documents. One document is required from column A, B, and C.

Column A (must provide one) Evidence of Residency

- Record of recent mortgage payment and/or property tax bill
- Copy of lease and record of recent rental payment
- Landlord Affidavit and recent rental payment
- Section 8 Agreement
- FOR ALL NEW CONSTRUCTION - Must provide a certificate of occupancy

Column B (must provide one) Evidence of Occupancy

- Recent bill dated within the past 60 days showing address with WRSD
- Gas Bill
- Oil Bill
- Electric Bill
- Home telephone bill (not cell phone)
- Cable Bill
- Excise Tax bill

Column C (must provide one) Evidence of Identification

- Valid Driver's license
- Valid MA photo ID card
- Valid Passport
- (photo ID for all above)

III. ENFORCEMENT: Should a question arise concerning any student's residency elsewhere while attending the WRSD, the student's residency will be subject to further inquiry and/or investigation. Such questions concerning residency may arise on the basis of, but are not limited to, incomplete, suspicious, or contradictory proofs of address; anonymous tips; correspondence that is returned to the WRSD because of an invalid or unknown address, or other grounds. The District may request additional documentation and may obtain the services of police, town departments and/or investigative agency personnel to conduct investigations into student residence. The Superintendent of Schools shall make the final determination of residency. Upon determination by the Superintendent of Schools that a student is actually residing in a city or town other than Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland or Sterling, the student's enrollment in WRSD shall be terminated immediately.

IV. PENALTIES: In addition to termination of enrollment and the imposition of other penalties permitted by law (M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 5), the WRSD reserves the right to recover restitution based upon the costs of educational services provided during the period of non-residency. The WRSD also reserves the right to pursue civil and/or criminal legal action(s).

V. EXCEPTIONS: to the residency requirements shall not apply to the following:

A. Students who are entitled to attend the WRSD under the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

B. Per WRSDC Policy 4240 Policy Relating to Budget/Finance Tuition, "....students in grades 8 and 12, who began the school year and have moved out of the District following the October 1 Enrollment report" may continue attending the WRSD school for the grade 8 or grade 12 year.

C. Students whose parents divorce or separate and share physical custody, provided one custodial parent remains a resident of Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland or Sterling and the student resides at least 50% of the time with the parent who resides in the Wachusett district. (Legal documentation must be provided to the school office.)

D. Under unusual circumstances, families may appeal the decision to the Superintendent of Schools, who may consider the student's educational history and educational continuity. The Superintendent's decision will be final.

VI. NOTIFICATION The WRSD residency requirements, verification procedures, and consequences of falsifying or misrepresenting residency will be published in the WRSD's Policy Manual, and published in each school handbook.
First Reading: 08/21/17
Second Reading: 09/11/17
WRSDC Policy 6121

WRSDC Policy 6400

BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Corporal Punishment. Corporal punishment is prohibited. Staff shall develop alternative techniques for managing student discipline in accordance with District policy.

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

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

Long & Short Term Student Suspensions (Threatening harm to students, staff, and or school facilities). The Wachusett Regional School District shall ensure that each pupil has an atmosphere and an environment which is conducive to teaching and learning. To that end, schools shall maintain programs, which maximize opportunities for learning and minimize disruptions to the educational process. The District's first concern shall be to help maintain pupils in school so that their learning process is not interrupted.

Students who create discipline problems, which cannot be resolved through less severe means, shall be suspended. As a last resort, the district shall, at the discretion of the school Principal, and following the required due process, deny a pupil the right to attend school for a period not to exceed ten (10) days. The Principal's decision is final. Students will have the right and the responsibility to complete all assignments and make up all tests missed during the suspension. It will be the student's responsibility to confer with teachers and to complete make-up work within a reasonable time but in no instance exceeding three weeks after the suspension expires.

Expulsion. Expulsion shall be considered an action of last resort when the behavior of the student warrants such action at the discretion of the school Principal. The expulsion shall be governed by Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 71, sections 37h and 37h1/2, and Ch. 76 section 17.

Houghton Elementary School attempts to take a positive approach to the issue of conduct of children. The success of any school depends upon respect. We will attempt to administer consequences, when necessary, with compassion, clarity and firmness, while trying to foster self-discipline and responsibility. All children are expected to be courteous and respect the rights of all individuals.

The following general school rules governing each child's conduct are enforced by all staff in all areas of the school building and grounds:

- (1) Children are expected to walk in any part of the school (except when required for instruction) or to school buses.
- (2) Disruptive behavior, physical or verbal, is not tolerated.
- (3) Children are expected to treat others and their property with respect. Abusive behavior, physical or verbal, is not tolerated.
- (4) Children may not harass and/or disrupt the activities of others. (You will know if you are harassing, annoying or

- being disruptive when the other person informs you of that fact). (See School District policy #6436).
- (5) Only soft footballs and rubber balls, basketballs, and jump ropes may be brought from home to be used outside of the school during designated times
 - (6) Children are expected to use appropriate language at all times.
 - (7) Children and adults have the shared responsibility to maintain our beautiful school and its grounds.

Each teacher, who, through his/her own means and methods conforms to the policies established for the school, enforces children's conduct within the classroom. The teachers are the authority within the classroom and exercise this authority to create an effective atmosphere for learning for all children.

The school has the authority to discipline children for inappropriate behavior off-campus at school related functions or any other type of activity reasonably related to school activities.

Tobacco is prohibited and the consequence for such a violation will be suspension from school with the amount of time to be determined by the administration.

Special Education Discipline

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

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

WRSDC Policy P6433

Controlled Substance Policy SUBSTANCE ABUSE

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

Further, any student may be barred from a school-sponsored activity if there is reason to believe he/she has been drinking alcoholic beverages or using illegal substances prior to his/her attendance at or participation in said school-sponsored activity. Any staff member with knowledge of alcohol or harmful drug use or the carrying of harmful substances shall notify the Principal or the superintendent and the appropriate legal authorities.

WRSDC Policy P6435

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES WEAPONS

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

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

1. Any weapon found in a locker or other storage space which is assigned to a student and which has a lock or other security device may be considered to be the property of the student assigned to the locker or other storage space for the purpose of disciplinary action under the Student Discipline Code. Any student found to be in possession of a weapon on school premises or at a school-sponsored event may be subject to expulsion from school by the Principal.
2. Violations of this policy may lead to expulsion under the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 Section 37H. Procedures for enforcement shall be contained in the Student Discipline Code.
3. In addition to the school discipline indicated in the Student Discipline Code, provided in paragraph B., appropriate criminal

action shall be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 269, Section 10.
4. The weapons policy and regulations shall be implemented in accordance with the due process provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws and the Code of Massachusetts Regulations of the Department of Education, and the Student Discipline code.

WRSDC Policy P6434A

**POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES
SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

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

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

DEFINITION

The legal definition of sexual harassment is:

Unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's success as a student;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis of educational decisions

affecting such individual(s); or

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

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

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

- A. Depending upon the severity of the harassment, these steps will be taken for the first act of harassment:

The child who has been allegedly harassed will give a written and verbal reporting of the incident to the building Principal or Assistant Principal.

The child accused of the act of harassment will be verbally informed of the report of the incident and asked to give his/her verbal account of the incident. A written report of his/her account will also be kept. The child who was allegedly harassed may be present during this interview, as appropriate or desired by the school administration.

Parents of the child accused of harassment will be notified by phone and/or mail. At the discretion of the school administration, professional personnel working with this child may also be notified of the incident and its consequences verbally and/or in writing.

- B. If a child is accused of repeated acts of harassment or the severity of the harassment is deemed by the school administration as extreme, resulting in more than 10 days suspension or in expulsion, the following due process procedure will be implemented:

...A written notice to the child accused of harassment of the opportunity for a hearing.

...A written notice of the charges to include telephone notification to the child's parent/guardian and a written copy of the charges

mailed to the child's parent/guardian.

...The right to be represented by a lawyer or advocate and adequate time to prepare for a hearing.

...Access to documented evidence and opportunity to present witnesses and evidence on the child's behalf.

...The right to question witnesses.

...A written decision including the specific grounds for the decision.

In addition, any child expelled from school by the Principal shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent of Schools.

Complaint Procedure:

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

1. Speak or send a note to any employee of the school district whom you trust, (i.e., nurse, psychologist/counselor, teacher, Principal, Assistant Principal, Superintendent, etc.). You can also speak to your parents who can then notify the superintendent, Principal or Assistant Principal. Remember that the complaint procedure does not start until school/District personnel receive the complaint.
2. Within two school days of receipt of the verbal complaint, the employee will notify the Principal/Superintendent, and your parent/guardian will be notified of the pending complaint.
3. If you have not or do not want to put the complaint in writing, the employee will do so. This should be done no later than two (2) school days after you have talked, or given the note, to the employee. The complaint has to be put in writing to make sure that the employee fully and correctly understands the issue(s). A copy of the complaint, in writing, will be reviewed with you and your parent/guardian to ensure accuracy, before it is shared with the subject of the complaint.
4. The employee will refer the written complaint to the Principal/Superintendent. The Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee may speak with you to get more information. In any case, the Principal/ Superintendent or his/her designee will speak to the person who is alleged to have sexually harassed you (called the "respondent") to obtain information as well.
 - a. If the Principal/Superintendent feels that the complaint can be resolved without a formal investigation, he/she may use the informal procedure.¹ The informal procedure simply attempts to resolve the situation and can be done in many ways. Examples are:

The Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee may have a conversation between you and the respondent where you can tell the respondent that the behavior bothers you and must stop.

Even if the Principal/Superintendent thinks that the informal procedure is acceptable, you or the respondent may ask that the formal procedure be used, rather than, or after, the informal procedure.

- The Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee may have you write a letter to the respondent saying that the behavior bothers you and must stop.
- The Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee may have separate conversations with you and the respondent.

Examples of possible resolutions are as follows:

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

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

Investigative deadlines may be extended under extenuating circumstances such as illness.

Formal Procedure:

1. The formal procedure is used when any one of the following occurs:
 - a. You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent ask that the formal procedure be used;
 - b. The Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee decides that the formal procedure should be used; or
 - c. You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent feels that the informal procedure was not helpful or adequate and one of the parties **requested**, within five (5) school days, that the formal procedure be used:
2. The formal procedure will be completed within twenty (20) school days of the complaint being filed with the Principal/Superintendent, or if the informal procedure was used, within twenty (20) school days of the request to start the formal procedure.
3. The Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee shall investigate the complaint and complete a written report, which will include:
 - All facts and circumstances of the incident;
 - A summary of the investigation, which will include interviews with anyone reasonably believed to have relevant information, namely, the individual filing the complaint, the respondent, and, if either party is under the age of 18, their parents (if appropriate), witnesses, and anyone else who may have experienced similar conduct;
 - A description of any actions already taken and/or proposed by the Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee.

WRSDC Policy P6434F

**POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES
SEXUAL HARASSMENT (continued)**

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

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

Either party may appeal the decision of the Principal in writing to the superintendent, within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the findings of the formal procedure. The decision will be reviewed to ensure adequacy of the investigation and conclusions. Parties will be given an opportunity to submit additional information. The Superintendent or his/her designee will make a decision and provide it in writing to both parties within thirty (30) days. The decision of the superintendent shall be final.

Other Resources:

Individuals also have the right to seek a remedy from the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 727-3990, and/or the

Retaliation:

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

Considerations To Remember:

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

STUDENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Houghton Elementary School is a school with a long tradition of excellence. We are proud of our curriculum instruction and support services. Our school environment can only remain strong if we maintain order and proper decorum in our building. All members of the Houghton Elementary School community are expected to treat themselves and others with respect. Houghton Elementary School has clear behavioral expectations for our students; there are consequences for those who choose to disobey our rules.

DISCIPLINARY DUE PROCESS

SHORT TERM DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS: A student will be given oral notice of the offense with which he/she is charged and an opportunity to respond prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in the student's suspension from school for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. In the event that the Principal determines that the student will be suspended from school, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone and in writing.

LONG TERM DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS: Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in a student's suspension for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expulsion, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given written notice of a hearing at which they may be represented by an attorney at their expense and may examine and present witnesses and documentary evidence. Following this hearing, the decision maker (Principal/School Committee) will issue a written decision. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will have the right to appeal any decision imposing a long-term exclusion from school. Where the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71 §37H, the student shall have ten (10) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent of Schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §37H1/2, the student shall have five (5) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent. For exclusions imposed by the School Committee in accordance with M.G.L. c.76 §17, the student shall have the right to file a written request for reconsideration by the Committee within ten (10) days of the effective date of the exclusion. Pending the outcome of any such appeal, the disciplinary sanction imposed shall remain in effect. M.G.L. c. 76 §17, M.G.L. c. 71 §37H, M.G.L. c. 71 §37H1/2

1. **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Students who have been identified as students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or who the school has reason to believe might be eligible for special education services are entitled to additional procedural protections when a disciplinary exclusion is considered. In many cases, a student with a disability will be entitled to services identified by the student's Team as necessary to provide the student with a free

appropriate public education during periods of disciplinary exclusion exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. For additional information regarding the rights of students with disabilities in the context of school discipline, please contact the Principal or the Administrator of Special Education.

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

Consequences for Violations of Rules - When school rules are violated, the following may be implemented.

Academic Penalty - For every class that meets daily that a student cuts or misses because they are truant, two points will be deducted from the student's term average. For every class that meets every other day that a student cuts or misses because they are truant, four points will be deducted from the student's term average.

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

Out-of-School Suspension - In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to suspend students from attending school. These instances involve serious disruptions of the school community, or when other forms of discipline do not appear to be effective. For the duration of an out-of-school suspension, students may not visit the campus or attend any school-related events. At the conclusion of an out-of-school suspension, a student's parent(s) or guardian must have a discussion with the student's administrator and reach agreement on conditions for the student's readmission to the Wachusett school community.

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

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

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

Conduct which endangers persons or property or is seriously disruptive to the educational process. Included within such prohibited conduct are the following acts:

- a. Conduct causing a threat of danger to the physical well being of self or of other individuals.
- b. Physical assault on another which is not necessary for self-defense.
- c. Taking, or attempting to take, personal property of others.
- d. Willfully causing, attempting to cause, or threatening to cause damage to the property of others and/or the school.
- e. Possession and/or use of any kind of weapon whether on school premises or at any school-related event. For the purpose of this policy, weapons include, but are not limited to firearms, knives, or any other device or object that can be used to inflict or to threaten bodily harm (WRSD policy #6435).
- f. Participation in, or intentional incitement of, activities which results in an unauthorized occupancy by children, or others, of any part of the school premises and failure to leave promptly such premises

having been directed to by the Principal or designee; or, intentional incitement to participate in any form of disruptive demonstration.

- g. Open defiance of the authority of any administrator, teacher or persons having authority over the child, including verbal abuse.
- h. Repeated unauthorized absences from school.
- i. Intentional and/or successful incitement of truancy of other students.
- j. Fighting.
- k. Using, possessing and selling tobacco, alcohol or any controlled substances.
- l. Knowingly using or copying the academic work of others and presenting it as their own without proper attribution.
- m. Falsification of school records.
- n. Verbal abuse and/or harassment of other individuals.
- o. Other misconduct as determined by the school committee.

WRSDC Policy P5252

POLICY RELATING TO PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

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

A. Training

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

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

1. The District's restraint policy;
2. Interventions, which may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors;
3. Types of restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when an extended restraint is used;
4. Administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student; and
5. Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training in the use of physical restraint.
6. Designated staff members shall participate in a certified in-depth training in the use of physical restraint. Those designated staff members will then be authorized to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.

B. Administration of Physical Restraint

Physical restraint may only be used in the following circumstances:

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

Physical restraint is prohibited in the following circumstances:

1. As a means of punishment; or
2. As a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm. However, in the judgment of the staff member, if the property destruction or the refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive might escalate into, or could itself lead to serious, imminent harm to the student or to others, physical restraint is appropriate.

Only school personnel who have received required training pursuant to this policy shall administer physical restraint on students with, wherever possible, one adult witness who does not participate in the restraint.

The training requirements shall not preclude a teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

Physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or others from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation, subject to the safety requirements set forth in this policy. Floor or prone restraints may only be administered by a staff member who has received in-depth training as specified in this policy and, when in the judgment of the trained staff member, such method is required to provide safety for the student or others.

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

Additional safety requirements:

1. A restrained student shall not be prevented from breathing or speaking. A staff member will continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color and respiration, during the restraint.
2. If at any time during a physical restraint the student demonstrates significant physical distress, as determined by the staff member, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.
3. Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.

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

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

C. Reporting

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

1. The staff member shall verbally inform the Principal of the restraint as soon as possible and shall provide a written report no later than the next school working day.
2. The written report shall be provided to the Principal or designee. The Principal shall prepare the report if the Principal administered the restraint.
3. The Principal or designee shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the Department of Education, upon request.
4. The Principal shall send a copy of the report to the Superintendent at the Central Office.
5. **The** Principal or his/her designee shall verbally inform the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of such restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three school days following the use of such restraint. If the school customarily provides school related information to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided in that language

The written report shall include:

1. Names and job titles of the staff who administered the restraint and observers, if any; the date of the restraint; the time the restraint began and ended; and the name of the administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint.
2. A description of the activity in which the restrained student and other students and staff in the same room

or vicinity were engaged immediately preceding the use of physical restraint; the behavior that prompted the restraint; the efforts made to de-escalate the situation; alternatives to restraint that were attempted; and the justification for initiating physical restraint.

3. A description of the administration of the restraint including the holds used and reasons such holds were necessary; the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint; how the restraint ended; and documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided.
4. For extended restraints, the written report shall describe the alternatives to extended restraint that were attempted, the outcome of those efforts and the justification for administering the extended restraint.
5. Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student.
6. Information regarding opportunities for the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student and/or any other related matter.

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

D. Special Circumstances

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

E. Receiving/Investigating Complaints

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

This policy shall be reviewed annually, provided to school staff, and shall be included in student handbooks.

(M.G.L. chapter 69, section 1B, and chapter 71, section 37G; Massachusetts Department of Education Regulation 603 CMR 46.00 Physical Restraint)

WRSDC Policy P64

Wachusett Regional School District Harassment and Tolerance Policy

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES TOLERANCE

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

Bullying will not be tolerated. Bullying behaviors include but are not limited to teasing, verbal harassment, unwanted touches, physical attacks, and/or ostracism.

Reports of such conduct will be investigated and action will be taken under the guidelines of an individual school's disciplinary code. Reference to this policy will be placed in all student handbooks.

WRSDC Policy P6437

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES

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

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

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

Harassment

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

Student and Staff Responsibilities

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

Reporting Harassment, Discrimination or Hate Crimes

Students can report any case of harassment, discrimination or hate crimes to any adult in the school who is then responsible to inform the building Principal or designee. The school Principal or designee is responsible for receiving reports and complaints of violations at the school level. At the District level, the District Equity Coordinator is responsible for receiving and addressing reports or complaints of violations of this policy.

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

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

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

Reporting Other Incidences

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

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

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

Protection Against Retaliation

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

Ensuring Safety During Investigation

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

Determination of Proceedings

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

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

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

- the allegation is serious enough that it appears to place the complainant or any other person at physical risk;
- the incident has resulted in a criminal charge;
- the incident involves a referral to the Department of Children and Families (DCF);
- the allegation involves a serious form of harassment, discrimination or retaliation;
- there is a pending Formal Proceeding against the subject of the complaint;
- the subject of the complaint has previously been found to have violated this policy after Formal Proceedings, or
- that a formal proceeding is otherwise appropriate under the circumstances,

the designated official must then commence a Formal Proceeding.

Formal Proceedings-Investigation

The designated official will separately meet in a timely manner with the complainant and the subject of the complaint, and, if a student,

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

Following a prompt and thorough investigation, the designated official, in consultation with the District Equity Coordinator, will determine whether the allegations have been substantiated, and whether the policy, or, if the subject of the complaint is a student, the

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

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

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

Violations

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

False Reports

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

Discipline

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

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

Oversight

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

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

The District has a policy (P6438 Anti-Bullying Policy) that meets the legal requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O Act Relative to Bullying in Schools

Wachusett Regional School District Policy Prohibiting Discrimination

The student code of conduct, grievance procedures, sexual harassment policies, special education discipline policies, restraint policies and any other section of the student handbook will be translated into the primary language of a parent/guardian upon request.

**POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES
NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Wachusett Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, English Language Learner (ELL) status, housing status, or other protected status in the operation of the educational programs, activities, or employment policies, and no person will be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to its public schools, or in obtaining advantage and privileges in regards to courses of study and extracurricular programs of such public schools on account of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, English Language Learner (ELL) status, housing status or other protected category.

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

At the District level, the ADA (disability pertaining to non-students), Title VI and Title IX (race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, and sexual orientation Coordinator is Jeff Carlson, Director of Human Resources, WRSD, 1745 Main St., Jefferson, MA 01522, 508-829-1670

At the District level, the ADA and Section 504 (disability pertaining to students) Coordinator is Catherine Knowles., Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services, WRSD, 1745 Main St., Jefferson, MA 01522, 608-829-1670

Notice of Procedural Safeguards (formerly titled "Parent's Rights Brochure") can be accessed at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/>.

**Wachusett Regional School District Grievance Procedure for
Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504(Federal Laws) And
Chapter 622(State Law)**

Statement of Definition

A grievance is any alleged violation of the Wachusett District School Committee Policy on Non-Discrimination (P#6631) on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, in the operation of the educational programs, activities, or employment policies.

Grievance Procedure

Step #1

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

Step #2

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

Step#3

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

Statement

1. An aggrieved party, if not satisfied with the decision of the school committee, may refer the case to the Massachusetts State Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148 (781-338-3300) and to the Office of Civil Rights, Region I, U.S. Department of Education, John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House, Room 701, Boston, MA 02109 (617-223-9662)
2. It is the intention of this grievance procedure to render due process regarding complaints or violations of this policy at each step of this grievance procedure.

R8/24/01

The Wachusett Regional School District shall:

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

Regulations:

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

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

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

The following is a summary of major parent and student rights regarding their student records:

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

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

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

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

Amendment of Record - The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have the right to request that information of the record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have a right to a conference with the school Principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the Principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system.

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

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

WRSDC PolicyP 6515

POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

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

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

1. No school publication will accept advocacy or political advertising that is political, religious or discriminatory in nature.

2. All advertising is subject to review and approval by the Principal or a designee relative to content and appropriateness.
3. Final editorial control and approval of all materials intended for publication are the responsibility of, and may be subject to the approval of, the school administration. The Principal is editor of school publications.
4. This policy shall be referenced in the "Student Handbook."
5. A statement indicating the editorial control by the school administration regarding all advertising will be included on order forms or other similar correspondence.

WRSDC Policy P8130

DISTRIBUTION OF NOTICES BY STUDENTS

The Wachusett Regional School District shall permit only the distribution, via the students, of school and District related notices. WRSDC Policy 8130

WRSDC Policy P1523

POLICY RELATING TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONS DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE PUBLICATIONS

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

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

WRSD Student Handbook Addendum



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WRSD Nondiscrimination Statement

The Wachusett Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ELL status, housing status, or other protected status in the operation of the educational programs, activities, or employment policies, and no person will be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to its public schools, or in obtaining advantage and privileges in regards to courses of study and extracurricular programs of such public schools on account of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ELL status, housing status or other protected category.

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

Mohandas Gandhi

Evidence-based research gleaned from respected institutions, media reports, and the hallways of our nation's schools all point to the same truth: Bullying has devastating effects. Just a quick look at statistics reveals the depth of the problem:

- Analysis of high-profile school shootings such as Santana, Columbine, and Virginia Tech reveals that that up to 71 percent involved attacker(s) who felt bullied, persecuted, attacked, or injured.
- Around 160,000 school children stay home from school each day out of fear, often without telling their parents why.
- Children targeted by bullies experience higher than normal levels of insecurity, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and physical and mental symptoms.

- Adults who were bullies as children have higher rates of substance abuse, domestic violence, and other violent crimes.
- The percentage of students who report being bullied rose 50% from 1983 to 2003.
- Approximately 1 in 5 students experience bullying at school, and approximately 7% of students experience cyberbullying a school year.

In short, bullying is an act that cannot be ignored if we are to safeguard our nation's schools and young people.

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT CORE VALUES

Commitment to Excellence

- Modeling effective teaching that engages and meets the needs of all students
- Providing a rigorous curriculum with expanding options and opportunities for all
- Recruiting and retaining excellent staff

Perseverance

- Tenacity and hard work
- Persisting in the face of obstacles
- Focusing on goals

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing, evaluating, and problem solving
- Thinking creatively
- Being adaptive

Collaboration

- Listening and communicating effectively
- Maximizing strengths and respecting differences
- Cooperating to reach common ground

Global Citizenship and Responsibility

- Celebrating diversity while recognizing commonalities
- Demonstrating civic respect by giving back to the communities
- Developing student's leadership skills for success in a global society

Creativity and Innovation

- Respecting the diversity of thoughts and ideas
- Embedding the arts into content areas
- Thinking freely, not fearing mistakes

Acceptance and Respect of Others

- Demonstrating tolerance
- Fostering a community of teamwork and collaboration
- Creating an atmosphere of safety and acceptance

THE WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT:

- seeks to ensure meaningful student growth and promote social emotional well-being in a safe and nurturing environment.
- is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation.
- recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or

harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics.

- expects every member of the extended school community to take all forms of bullying seriously, to work to prevent it, and to report it when it is thought to have occurred.
- in a manner consistent with laws and regulations, will investigate all reported incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation in a timely, fair and discreet manner while being respectful of individual rights.
- when resolving verified incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, will proceed in a manner that stresses education and skill building.

DEFINITIONS:

Bullying -The repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

(i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his/her property;

(iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;

(iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or

(v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber-bullying: Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, **photoelectric** or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyberbullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses

(i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

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

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

Aggressor/ Perpetrator: A student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages, either individually, or as part of a group, in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.

Local law enforcement agency: local police department

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

Retaliation: Intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

LEADERSHIP:

A. District Bullying and Cyberbullying Statement

The WRSD Leadership is committed to implementing the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and in conjunction with community efforts, to promote and ensure a safe and positive teaching and learning environment. District leaders, community leaders, teachers, parents, guardians and student leaders, have a primary role in teaching students to regard one another in a respectful, civil, and dignified manner to create an environment that improves and sustains the behavioral health of all students. These stakeholders will promote understanding and respect for diversity and differences in all venues through modeling respectful behavior and promoting and sustaining a commitment to programs that are focused on supporting social-emotional development at all grade levels. The WRSD will provide age-appropriate anti-bullying educational experiences for all students in the district. As a school district, WRSD will enhance student achievement by creating and maintaining an educational environment where all students feel safe and in the unlikely event that a student feels uncomfortable, he or she will not be reluctant to communicate his/her concerns to teachers, staff, administrators, parents or guardians.

B. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the WRSD Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was developed by a committee consisting of district and building based administrators, teachers, and a school psychologist. Prior to the presentation of this plan to the School Committee, a final draft of the plan was made available on the WRSD website for Public Comment. A schedule will be set up to review the Plan by a committee on an annual basis. This will ensure that the plan is always updated and that behavioral health initiatives that support anti-bullying are instituted throughout the district in an effective, deliberate and sustaining manner.

C. Implementation

Consistent with applicable laws and regulations, all Principals will be implementing (with the support of the Superintendent and/or the School Committee), the following documents/ action plans:

- Create narrative and graphic documents showing end-to-end process and procedures for all types of bullying/cyberbullying incidents
- Receive and investigate reports on Bullying
- Plan intervention support strategies that meet the needs of the targets, aggressors and retaliators involved in the reported incidents
- Choose and implement a Bully Prevention Curricula that each school will use
- Review, and where necessary, update District student and staff handbooks, and code of conduct
- Lead parent, guardian and family engagement efforts by providing appropriate informational materials for this group
- Collect and analyze building and district-wide data on past bullying incidents to understand trends and patterns, define the present problem, and create a baseline from which to measure improved outcomes
- Create a Records Retention Plan for incidents

POLICY JURISDICTION

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited: on school grounds, on property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, at a function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or bullying school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district or a school; and at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. As stated in M.G.L. c.71 Sec.370 nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

WRSD will investigate bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation incidents in a fair, timely, and thorough manner while being mindful of personal privacy rights and the stigma that a student may **encounter** from being labeled in some way or another. Verified incidents of bullying, in all of its forms will be dealt with firmly. Dispositions will begin with education and, when deemed necessary, will move to progressively sterner measures.

A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation Requirements:

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member will be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. When reporting in writing, administrators, teachers, parents, school bus drivers, cafeteria workers, playground monitors, and any and all other staff and community members can access the "Bullying, Cyber-bullying, Retaliation

Incident Referral Form" in the Main Office of the school, guidance/school psychologist's office, the nurse's office, the Wachusett Regional School District

1. Reporting by Staff:

A staff member will promptly report to the principal or designee any instances of bullying or retaliation witnessed by the staff member or that is reported to the staff member by a student, parent, or other individual and then follow up with an Incident Referral Form. The requirement to notify the principal shall not, however, limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline. (see Appendix A for reporting form)

2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others:

In an effort to keep its students safe, the Wachusett Regional School District believes that it is the responsibility of students, parents, guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Any individual who wishes to file such a complaint may request, and shall be provided with, assistance from a school staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The filing of a false or fabricated complaint of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is strictly prohibited and shall result in disciplinary action. (see Appendix A for reporting forms)

B. Responding to Report of Bullying, Cyberbullying or Retaliation- Allegations of Bullying by a Student

1. Safety

Once an initial report of bullying or retaliation has been brought to the attention of school personnel, the designated school personnel will take appropriate action(s) to maintain a sense of safety for all parties involved in the report, including the target, the aggressor and the reporting party (if it is a student). Once designated school personnel have made a determination regarding the validity of the report, additional steps and modifications will be made to keep students safe. In creating a safety plan appropriate accommodations may be indicated to limit the interaction between the target and the aggressor throughout the course of the school day. This would include but is not limited to, the classroom setting, the cafeteria, recess and school bus seating assignment. The Principal or his/her designee will implement safeguards to Ensure that all students involved in

the incident are protected during the course of the investigation process. All students will be reminded by the Principal or his/her designee that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

2. Investigation

- The Principal or his/her designee will promptly investigate all reports of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.
- The Principal or his/her designee will determine if police interaction is deemed necessary.
- During the investigation, the Principal or his/her designee will interview students, staff, witnesses and parents or guardians.
- The Principal or his/her designee will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.
- Interviews will be conducted by the Principal or his/her designee, in consultation with the school counselor as necessary.
- To the extent practicable, the Principal or his/her designee will maintain confidentiality throughout the investigative process and will maintain a written record of the investigation.
- Procedures for investigating reports of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal or his/her designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

3. Determinations

If the incident is verified to be bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, a meeting will be arranged by the school official with the aggressor and the aggressor's parents or guardians. In the meeting, it will be made clear to both the aggressor and the parents or guardians that bullying, cyberbullying and/or retaliation will not be tolerated in the Wachusett Regional School District. A meeting may also take place with the target and the target's parents or guardians. Depending on the level of the incident, local authorities may be informed of such incident(s) and the school will follow the recommendation from local authorities in resolving the continued behavior of the aggressor.

4. Responses to Bullying / Consequences from Findings

Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in its level of seriousness and what impact it has on the target and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of "bullying," as defined in this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, will generally warrant disciplinary action against the aggressor, whether and to what extent disciplinary actions are imposed (e.g., detention, suspension, etc.) is a matter for the professional discretion of the building Principal or his/her designee. No disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint. District administrators will integrate a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. The needs and safety of the target will also be considered as part of restoring resolution to the bullying matter. Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the building Principal or his/her designee and will address the acts of the aggressor and the needs of the target, and assure the sanction against bullying behavior is enforced with the goal that the bullying behavior will cease and desist.

Consequences should consider these specific issues: Nature, severity, and chronicity of the behavioral impact on the target

- a. Degree of physical, psychological, social harm on the target
- b. Student's age, development and degree of maturity
- c. Surrounding circumstances and context in which the incident(s) occurred

- d. Prior disciplinary history and continuing patterns of behavior
- e. Relationship between and among the parties involved
- f. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred
- g. The need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.

The appropriate range of consequences, subject to due process where appropriate, may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Report to law enforcement
- b. Expulsion
- c. Referral to outside agency
- d. Reassignment of classes
- e. Reassignment of seats in lunch, bus, class, etc.
- f. Out-of-school suspension
- g. In-school suspension
- h. Detention
- i. Loss of privileges (including before and after school activities)
- j. Temporary removal from the classroom
- k. Verbal reprimand

In addition, instructional activities designed to develop the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying and/or retaliatory behaviors will be given, which may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Reparation to the target
- b. Completion of curricular based assignment(s)
- c. Meeting with Civil Rights Coordinator
- d. Completion of community service designed to help the aggressor understand and respect differences; written report required by the aggressor
- e. Therapeutic support for both aggressor and targets

5. Notification Obligation

- **Notice to Parents or Guardians**
Once an assessment of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation has been made and been deemed valid, the Principal or his/her designee will immediately inform the parent(s) or guardian of the target and the aggressor of the incident. At this time, parents/guardians will also be informed of the investigation and disciplinary procedures that may follow. There may be incidents where parents are notified prior to the Investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
- **Notice to Another School or District**
If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Principal or his/her designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.
- **Notice to Law Enforcement**
At any point after receiving and/or investigating a report of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, if the Principal or his/her designee has determined that the incident has elevated to a level that is believed to be criminal in nature, charges may be pursued against the aggressor. The Principal will notify the local law enforcement agency of said incident. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Principal or his/her designee will contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has reasonable evidence to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. In making this 13 determination, the Principal will, (consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and

procedures), consult with the School Resource officer, or other individuals he/she deems appropriate.

ACADEMIC AND NON ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Wachusett Regional School District seeks to create a safe, respectful and caring school and classroom environment for all students regardless of their race, color, national origin, creed, religion, gender or gender identity, sex or sexual orientation, age, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, family situation or disability. WRSD will lay the foundation for a positive school climate in pre-school and will continue to teach, nurture, and positively reinforce **prosocial** behavior throughout students' academic experiences.

- Each grade level will be **provided a developmentally** appropriate and evidenced-based curriculum and instruction to teach pro-social skills such as conflict resolution, cooperation, assertiveness, communication, expressing feelings, problem solving, cyber safety, and appreciation for diversity.
- The entire school community (e.g. students, teachers, parents, bus drivers, lunchroom staff, janitorial staff, etc.) will work collaboratively to promote a caring and supportive school environment among all of its staff and students.

Non-Academic Bullying Prevention Efforts:

- Administration will review student behavioral expectations during grade level assemblies during the first week of school.
- The definition of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation and the protocol for handling incidents of bullying will be emphasized.
- Staff presence will be increased in areas where bullying is most likely to occur; (i.e.) bus arrival and departure locations, hallways, lunchrooms, recess, and near restrooms.
- A variety of evidence - based prevention programs to promote diversity awareness and respect for self and others will be explored and offered. District schools currently use the following programs: Second Step, Responsive Classroom, MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center), and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) (See Appendix B for full descriptions of these programs)
- Schools will encourage student involvement in school events and extra-curricular activities to reduce isolation and the likelihood of becoming a target of bullying (i.e. Student Council)

Academic Bullying Prevention Efforts:

- Educating students on the life skills and competences for Social and Emotional Learning (Domain 5, Wachusett Regional School District Strategic Plan)
- Meaningful relationships between staff and students will be fostered so that every student will have at least one supportive adult to share concerns with, enhancing their feeling of safety in the school.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A key aspect of promoting a positive school climate is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. Below is a summary of strategies aimed to provide supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the district's capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation, these services will be available to reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and to provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors. School-based counselors are available to all students for counseling. The Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services will regularly update a list of mental health resources available in the community and provide this list to all schools. School administrators, staff, and parents will collaborate in determining appropriate referral services.

A. Identifying resources.

WRSD will annually review its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. This will include a review of current staffing and programs that foster positive school culture as well as identifying any gaps in

services and resources that need to be addressed. Principals will respond to the needs of their individual schools in order to assess existing and needed resources.

B. Counseling and other services

The District will work collaboratively with school mental health staff and outside agencies to maintain a list of providers that will support schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Schools may consider current tools including, but not limited to, behavioral intervention plans, restorative justice practices, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula.

C. Students with disabilities

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or that he/she may be vulnerable to bullying or harassment because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

D. Referral to outside services Clear protocols that are part of the WRSD Wellness Plan will help students and families access appropriate and timely services.

COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

Wachusett Regional School District recognizes the importance of collaboration with families in order to optimize the school's ability to prevent and respond to bullying. Our goal is to provide useful information and resources to parents/guardians of students, and to ensure sufficient channels of communication between the families and schools.

- Parent education and resources
- At the beginning of each school year, WRSD will inform parents/guardians of enrolled students of the policies and procedures for prevention and intervention of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation in its annual publication of the Student/Parent Handbook.
- Each school will inform parents and guardians about the anti-bullying curricula being used.
- In order to continually gain feedback from parents/guardians, a survey will be administered on an annual basis. This information will be very important to us as we continue to assess the effectiveness of our bullying policies/procedures.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF TRAINING

Under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O the Wachusett Regional School District must provide ongoing professional development for all staff, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals as well as providing opportunities for **parents**, guardians, and community members to participate in this anti-bullying/ cyber-bullying initiative.

All stakeholders in the Wachusett Regional School District must be made aware of the new state anti-bullying law and how it changes the definitions, reporting, investigation and punishment of bullying incidents. Our School Committee, administrators, and faculty will be responsible for disseminating this information and for projecting how these changes will reflect on cultural changes in our schools as the implementation of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O moves forward.

Through training and professional development, the WRSD will seek to raise the overall level of mental health services in our district schools to decrease the number of bullying incidents that may take place. The district will focus on training and development programs that give staff the skills and understanding to create safer schools, not only to respond to the state mandate under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, but also to benefit our children and our community.

A. Annual staff training on the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

School- based annual training for all school staff by the building Principal or designee will include:

- Staff responsibilities under the new law
- An overview of the steps that the Principal or his/her designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation
- An overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grade levels throughout the district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year will be required to participate in this school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.
- Ongoing district- wide professional development.

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of the tools available for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build upon the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying incidents. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-wide and district-wide professional development, will be informed by research and will include information on:

- Effective and developmentally or age-appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- Developmentally or age-appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to bullying;
- Current 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;
- Current information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- Internet safety curriculum with reference to cyber-bullying as “unacceptable” behavior.

Professional development will also continue to address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects their social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the Wachusett Regional School District for professional development may include:

- Increasing the overall level of mental health services in our schools so that all students will experience kindness and compassion
- Making sure our classrooms and schools are psychologically safe for all students and staff
- Promoting a deeper understanding of respect so that our language and behavior reflects respect for everyone (modeling)
- Teaching tolerance and respect for the diversity and differences that exists in people
- Building rapport with the families of our community so that we all see the value of safe schools and are willing to support this new anti-bullying initiative

- Managing classroom behaviors so that we can break the cycle of unproductive behavior
- Using intervention strategies which will allow all participants to refrain from aggressive behavior and see the real benefits of tolerance and respect
- Proactively teaching our students that actions come from the contents of our thoughts and that a big part of growing up is learning that we don't have to act on all of our thoughts

B. Written notice to staff.

The school district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Sections related to staff responsibilities will be included in the district employee handbook.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION

Under Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 amended Section 37O of chapter 71 of the General Laws, any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seek assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information **are also** available at the Superintendent's office.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies. In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

School Committee Policies

POLICY RELATING TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATION

Policy 1523 DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE PUBLICATIONS

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

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

This policy shall be included in all Student Handbooks.

POLICY RELATING TO

EDUCATION Policy 3611.4

ENRICHMENT

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

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

Wachusett Regional School District shall:

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

This policy shall be referenced in each school's student handbook. In addition, school councils shall annually review the needs of gifted and talented students.

POLICY RELATING TO EDUCATION

Policy 3625 TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS

In accordance with state and federal law, the District shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention education programs in grades K-12.

The alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, with emphasis on nonuse by school-age children. The program also shall include information about effective techniques and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using, as well as skills for addressing peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

Prevention requires education, and healthy decision-making. The objectives of this program are:

- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug use among children and youth.
- To increase students' understanding of the legal, social, emotional, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.
- To teach students self-management skills, social skills, negotiation skills, and refusal skills that will help them to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.

The curriculum, instructional materials, and outcomes used in this program shall be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Wachusett Regional School District Committee.

This policy shall be posted on the District's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents/guardians in accordance with state law. Additionally, the District shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

POLICY RELATING TO PERSONNEL

MANAGEMENT Policy 5252 PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members in the Wachusett Regional School District. While ensuring safety in District schools, staff must recognize that students are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Physical restraint is an emergency measure of last resort and should be utilized only when necessary to protect a student and/or school community member from assault or imminent, serious physical harm. Restraint, including mechanical restraint, medication restraint, physical escort, physical restraint, prone restraint, seclusion and time-out are defined under 603 CMR 46.00. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) defined inclusionary and exclusionary time-out in its Technical Assistance Advisory, SPED 2016-1, on 31 July 2015.

Chemical restraint, mechanical restraint, and seclusion are prohibited in all public school education programs. The District will follow the requirements for restraint outlined in 603 CMR 46.00, including requirements for safety, duration, follow-up, prone/floor restraints, reporting, administrative review and training. The District will adhere to the guidelines for time-out as outlined in the DESE Technical Assistance Advisory, SPED 2016-1.

Neither 603 C.M.R. 46.00 nor this policy prohibits: (1) any teacher, employee or agent of the District from using reasonable force to protect students, others or themselves from imminent, serious, physical harm; (2) any individual from reporting to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual; (3) law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or (4) an individual from reporting neglect or abuse to the appropriate state agency, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119 § 51A.

The District will develop and implement specific written procedures that include: appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention, including methods to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide; alternatives to physical restraint; description of physical restraints used in emergency situations; restraint complaint procedure; restraint training and reporting requirements; restraint follow-up procedures; periodic review of restraint data procedures; procedures on the use of time-out as a behavioral support strategy; and methods to engage parents in discussion about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency measure.

The District will annually review its Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures, provide it to all District staff, and make it available to parents of enrolled students.

POLICIES RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES Policy 6312 REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance is essential to the achievement of students in the Wachusett Regional School District. In accordance with Massachusetts State Law (MGL), parent/guardian has the responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

If the school does not receive a message from the parent/guardian by the designated time established by the school, then the school shall call to inquire about the student's absence. Parents will be contacted within three (3) days of the student's absence if the parent/guardian has not contacted the school regarding the absence.

The parent/guardian will also be notified when a student has at least five days in which the student has missed two or more classes/periods (unexcused) or who has five or more unexcused absences in the school year. A meeting will be scheduled with the building principal (or his/her designee), the parent/guardian and the student to develop an action plan to improve the student's attendance.

Legal Refs: Chapter 222 of the Acts of 2012, Chapter 76, Section 1B

Policy 6400 BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

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

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

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

1. age of the student;
2. mitigating circumstances;

3. previous behavior of the student; and
4. attitude of the student.

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

1. student rights and responsibilities;
2. student behavior and discipline; and
3. glossary of terms.
- 4.

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

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

Corporal Punishment. Corporal punishment is prohibited. Staff shall develop alternative techniques for managing student discipline in accordance with District policy.

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

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

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

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

Students will have the right and the responsibility to complete all assignments and make up all tests missed during the suspension. It will be the student's responsibility to confer with teachers and to

complete make-up work within a reasonable time but in no instance exceeding three weeks after the suspension expires.

Expulsion. Expulsion shall be considered an action of last resort when the behavior of the student warrants such action at the discretion of the school principal. The expulsion shall be governed by Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 71, sections 37h and 37h1/2, and Ch. 76 section 17

Policy 6431.1 TOBACCO PRODUCTS ON SCHOOL PREMISES PROHIBITED

Use of any tobacco products, including, but not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco and snuff and electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic pipes or other similar products that rely on vaporization or aerosolization, within school buildings, school facilities, on school grounds or school buses, or at school-sponsored events by any individual, including, but not limited to school personnel and students, is prohibited at all times.

A staff member determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code.

This policy shall be promulgated to all staff and students in appropriate handbook(s) and publications.

Signs shall be posted in all school buildings informing the general public of the District policy and requirements of state law.

Policy 6433.1 ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE BY STUDENTS PROHIBITED

A student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy or sell, or give away: any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product, including vapor/E-cigarettes; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance except for prescribed medical purposes within any school or on school grounds at any time. The Wachusett Regional School District Committee (WRSDC) also prohibits the use or consumption by students of the aforementioned on school grounds or school buses, or at any school-sponsored event.

Additionally, any student who is under the influence of drugs or alcoholic beverages prior to, or during, attendance at or participation in a school-sponsored activity, will be barred from that activity and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Verbal Screening

- The school district shall utilize, in accordance with law, a verbal screening tool approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to screen students for substance abuse disorders. The tool shall be administered by trained staff on an annual basis at grades 7 and 10.

- Parents/guardians shall be notified of the screening prior to the opening of school each year. Parents/guardians shall have the right to opt out of the screening by written notice prior to or during the screening.
- All statements made by a student during a screening are confidential and shall not be disclosed except in the event of immediate medical emergency or in accordance with law. De-identified results shall be reported to the Department of Public Health within 90 days of the completion of the screening process.

This policy shall be posted on the District's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents/guardians of this policy in accordance with state law. Additionally, the District shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

Policy 6434 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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

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

DEFINITION:

The legal definition of sexual harassment is:

Unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

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

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

- Touching (arm, breast, buttocks, shoulders, etc.)
- Verbal comments (about parts of the body, what type of sex the victim would "be good at," clothing, looks, etc.)
- Name calling (from "honey" to "bitch" and worse)
- Starting and repeating sexual rumors
- Leers and stares
- Sexual or "dirty" jokes
- Cartoons, pictures, and pornography

- Using the computer to leave sexual messages or graffiti, or to play sexually offensive computer games
- Gestures
- Pressure for sexual activity
- Cornering, blocking, standing too close, following
- Conversations that are too personal
- “Rating” an individual – for example, on a scale from 1 to 10
- Obscene t-shirts, hats, or pins
- Showing inappropriate videos and other materials during class
- Sexual assault and attempted sexual assault
- Massaging the neck, massaging the shoulders
- Touching oneself sexually in front of others
- Graffiti
- Making kissing sounds or smacking sounds, licking the lips suggestively
- Howling, catcalls, whistles
- Repeatedly asking someone out when he/she is not interested
- Pulling down someone’s pants or forcibly removing other articles of clothing
- Facial expressions (winking, kissing, etc.)
- “Slam books” (lists of students’ names with derogatory sexual comments written about them by other students)

Complaint Procedure:

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

1. Speak or send a note to any employee of the school district whom you trust, (i.e., nurse, psychologist/counselor, teacher, principal, assistant principal, superintendent, etc.). You can also speak to your parents who can then notify the superintendent, principal or assistant principal. Remember that the complaint procedure does not start until school/District personnel receive the complaint.
2. Within two school days of receipt of the verbal complaint, the employee will notify the principal/superintendent, and your parent/guardian will be notified of the pending complaint.
3. If you have not or do not want to put the complaint in writing, the employee will do so. This should be done no later than two (2) school days after you have talked, or given the note, to the employee. The complaint has to be put in writing to make sure that the employee fully and correctly understands the issue(s). A copy of the complaint, in writing, will be reviewed with you and your parent/guardian to ensure accuracy, before it is shared with the subject of the complaint.
4. The employee will refer the written complaint to the principal/superintendent. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may speak with you to get more information. In any case, the principal/superintendent or his/her designee will speak to the person who is alleged to have sexually harassed you (called the “respondent”) to obtain information as well.
5. If the principal/superintendent feels that the complaint can be resolved without a formal investigation, he/she may use the informal procedure.¹ **The informal procedure simply attempts to resolve the situation and can be done in many ways. Examples are:**
 - The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have a conversation between you and the respondent where you can tell the respondent that the behavior bothers you and must stop.

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

Examples of possible resolutions are as follows:

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

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

Investigative deadlines may be extended under extenuating circumstances such as illness.

Formal Procedure:

1. The formal procedure is used when any one of the following occurs:
 - a. You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent ask that the formal procedure be used;
 - b. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee decides that the formal procedure should be used; or
 - c. You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent feels that the informal procedure was not helpful or adequate and one of the parties request, within five (5) school days, that the formal procedure be used.
2. The formal procedure will be completed within twenty (20) school days of the complaint being filed with the principal/superintendent, or if the informal procedure was used, within twenty (20) school days of the request to start the formal procedure.
3. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee shall investigate the complaint and complete a written report, which will include:
 - All facts and circumstances of the incident;
 - A summary of the investigation, which will include interviews with anyone reasonably believed to have relevant information, namely, the individual filing the complaint,

¹ Even if the principal/superintendent thinks that the informal procedure is acceptable, you or the respondent may ask that the formal procedure be used, rather than, or after, the informal procedure.

- respondent, and, if either party is under the age of 18, their parents (if appropriate), witnesses, and anyone else who may have experienced similar conduct;
- A description of any actions already taken and/or proposed by the principal/superintendent or his/her designee.

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

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

Either party may appeal the decision of the principal in writing to the superintendent, within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the findings of the formal procedure. The decision will be reviewed to ensure adequacy of the investigation and conclusions. Parties will be given an opportunity to submit additional information. The superintendent or his/her designee will make a decision and provide it in writing to both parties within thirty (30) days. The decision of the superintendent shall be final.

Other Resources:

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

Retaliation:

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

Considerations To Remember:

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

Reference to this policy **shall be included in all student handbooks.**

Policy 6435 WEAPONS

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

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

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

2. Violations of this policy may lead to expulsion under the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 Section 37H. Procedures for enforcement shall be contained in the Student Discipline Code.
3. In addition to the school discipline indicated in the Student Discipline Code, provided in paragraph B., appropriate criminal action shall be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 269, Section 10.
4. The weapons policy and regulations shall be implemented in accordance with the due process provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws and the Code of Massachusetts Regulations of the Department of Education, and the Student Discipline code.

Policy 6437 PROMOTING CIVIL RIGHTS AND PROHIBITING HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND HATE CRIMES

The Wachusett Regional School District is committed to providing our students equal educational opportunities and a safe learning environment free from harassment, discrimination and hate crimes.

The District will not tolerate unlawful or disruptive behaviors at school or school-related activities including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities and parent involvement. The District will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of harassment, discrimination and hate crimes and will take prompt, effective action to end such behaviors including, when appropriate, referral to law enforcement agencies.

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

Harassment:

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

Student and Staff Responsibilities

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

Reporting Harassment, Discrimination or Hate Crimes

Students can report any case of harassment, discrimination or hate crimes to any adult in the school who

is then responsible to inform the building principal or designee. The school principal or designee is responsible for receiving reports and complaints of violations at the school level. At the District level, the District Equity Coordinator is responsible for receiving and addressing reports or complaints of violations of this policy.

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

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

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

Reporting Other Incidences

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

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

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

Protection Against Retaliation

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

Ensuring Safety During Investigation

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

Determination of Proceedings

Upon receipt of a complaint or report, the District must determine whether to undertake formal or informal proceedings to resolve the complaint or report. Upon receipt of a complaint or report, a designated official will attempt to identify and obtain cooperation from the victim(s). Where the

designated official does not obtain the identity or cooperation of the alleged victim(s), the District will proceed with an investigation and then proceed to formal or informal proceedings to the extent possible.

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

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

- the allegation is serious enough that it appears to place the complainant or any other person at physical risk;
- the incident has resulted in a criminal charge;
- the incident involves a referral to the Department of Children and Families (DCF);
- the allegation involves a serious form of harassment, discrimination or retaliation;
- there is a pending Formal Proceeding against the subject of the complaint;
- the subject of the complaint has previously been found to have violated this policy after Formal Proceedings, or
- that a formal proceeding is otherwise appropriate under the

circumstances, the designated official must then commence a Formal Proceeding.

Formal Proceedings-Investigation

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

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

and any decision or recommendation for disciplinary and corrective action.

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

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

Violations

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

False Reports

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

Discipline

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

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

Oversight

The District has designated the Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services as the District Equity Coordinator. The Equity Coordinator will, under the supervision of the Superintendent of Schools, ensure the successful administration of and compliance with this policy. Information including the the name of the Equity Coordinator, his/her mailing address, telephone number and email address

will be posted prominently in the District office as well as all school buildings within the District.

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

The District has a policy (P6438 Anti-Bullying Policy) that meets the legal requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*

Policy 6438 – ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Wachusett Regional School District fosters and strives to maintain educational environments that are free from bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. No student or school staff member, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers

athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals in the Wachusett Regional School District shall be permitted to bully a student through conduct or communication or to retaliate

against any individual for reporting bullying or cooperating with an investigation of bullying. A student or school staff member, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors, to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals, who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation will be subject to a range of disciplinary sanctions including, but not limited to, reprimand, detention, suspension, expulsion, or other sanctions as determined by administration. In addition to being subject to school or employment related disciplinary sanctions, individuals who engage in bullying and/or retaliation shall be required to participate in instructional activities designed to develop the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying and/or retaliatory behavior(s).

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

A. Definitions

Bullying: The repeated use by one or more students or by a school staff member, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional, of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this policy, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

Cyber-bullying: Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic,

photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying or cyber-bullying.

Aggressor/Perpetrator: A student or school staff member including but not limited to who engaged, either individually, or as part of a group, in bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

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

Local law enforcement agency: Local police department(s).

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

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

Target/Victim: A student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

B. Policy Jurisdiction

For purposes of this policy, bullying is prohibited:

1) on school grounds, on property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, at a function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district or a school; and

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

C. Reporting Requirements

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

D. Investigation / Procedures

1. Investigative Procedures for Potential Bullying or Retaliation:

Each school is required to investigate in a timely manner and determine whether or not bullying and /or retaliation has occurred. This requires a determination as to the nature of the incident (bullying v. peer conflict). Once determined, outreach to the target and family shall occur concurrently with a commitment to addressing the needs of the target, identifying and educating bystanders, and providing consequences for aggressors.

Steps to be taken will include:

- a. Determine the nature, chronicity, and severity of the presenting situation.
- b. Identify aggressor(s), target(s), and bystanders
- c. Provide a safety and comfort plan for the target(s)
- d. Identify whether or not the bullying has occurred on or off campus
- e. Immediately remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action
- f. Have timely conversations with all individuals involved
- g. Establish a timetable for following up with parents, especially parents of target(s)
- h. Inform parents, guardians and all relevant adults of initial investigation following confidentiality requirements
- i. Collect and document data

E. Consequences from Findings:

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior M.G.L. c. 71 § 370(d)(v). Skill building approaches include offering individualized skill-building sessions based on our district's anti-bullying curricula, providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with our counselors and psychologists, implementing a range of academic and non-academic positive behavioral support to help students understand prosocial ways to achieve their goals, meeting with parents and guardians to engage parent support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home, adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills, and making a referral for evaluation. If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance the plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct.

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504, which should be read in cooperation with the state laws regarding student discipline, govern discipline procedures for eligible

students with disabilities protected by these laws.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, the student shall be subject to disciplinary action. Consequences for bullying or retaliation should be immediately and consistently applied and must be delivered in a non-hostile manner.

Consequences may be disagreeable or uncomfortable but should not involve revenge or hostile punishment.

Consequences should consider these specific issues:

- a. Nature, severity, and chronicity of the behavioral impact on the target
- b. Degree of physical, psychological, social harm on the target
- c. Student's age, development and degree of maturity
- d. Surrounding circumstances and context in which the incident(s) occurred
- e. Prior disciplinary history and continuing patterns of behavior
- f. Relationship between and among the parties involved
- g. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred
- h. The need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.

The appropriate range of consequences, subject to due process where appropriate, may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Report to law enforcement
- b. Expulsion
- c. Referral to outside agency
- d. Reassignment of classes
- e. Reassignment of seats in lunch, bus, class, etc.
- f. Out-of-school suspension
- g. In-school suspension
- h. Detention
- i. Loss of privileges (including before and after school activities)
- j. Temporary removal from the classroom
- k. Verbal reprimand

In addition, instructional activities designed to develop the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying and/or retaliatory behaviors will be given, which may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Reparation to the target
- b. Completion of curricular based assignment(s)
- c. Meeting with Civil Rights Coordinator
- d. Completion of community service designed to help the aggressor understand and respect differences; written report required by the aggressor
- e. Therapeutic support for both aggressor and targets

F. Notification Obligations:

Notice to another school or district: If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, commonwealth charter school, or non-public school, a school administrator

shall promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school or district so that both may take appropriate action.

Notice to parents or guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the student aggressor of this, and the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations of 603 CMR 49.00, including 49.05 paragraph 4:

“A principal's notification to a parent about an incident or a report of bullying or retaliation must comply with confidentiality requirements of the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00, and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations, 34 CFR Part 99, as set forth in 603 CMR 49.07.”

The principal or designees will notify the parents/guardians of the acts the district has taken to prevent further acts of bullying and retaliation through consequences and instructional activities, as discussed above. Moreover, the school will notify the parents/guardians about the range of services, including, but not limited to, counseling both individually and in group settings, that are specifically designed to address issues of bullying and retaliation.

Notice to law enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirement of 603 CMR 49.00.

G. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The superintendent will be responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in district schools.

(i) Development of the Plan

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

The plan shall recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have any one (1) of the above characteristics.

The plan shall be reviewed and updated biennially.

School-wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Program

All Wachusett Regional schools will include a District-wide bullying prevention and intervention plan that is proactive and educational, in keeping with the guidelines published by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The district is committed to supporting each school in their adoption of a district-wide bullying prevention and intervention program.

(ii) Contents of the Plan

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

- (a) descriptions of and statements prohibiting bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation;
- (b) procedures for students, staff, parents, guardians, and others to report bullying or retaliation;
- (c) a provision that reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously but that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- (d) a provision that any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action;
- (e) procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation;
- (f) procedures for collecting, maintaining and reporting bullying incident data;
- (g) the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a perpetrator for bullying or retaliation; provided, however, that the disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
- (h) clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that victim's needs for protection
- (i) strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors, targets and appropriate family members;
- (j) procedures consistent with state and federal law for promptly notifying the parents or guardians of a victim and a perpetrator; provided, that the parents or guardians of a victim shall also be notified of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation
- (k) provision for the notification of local law enforcement agencies if the principal reasonably believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor;
- (l) provision for annual and ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development training shall be in accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c.71,§37O;
- (m) provision for the implementation of a research-based anti-bullying curriculum in grades PK-12 and for informing parents regarding the curriculum contents, the dynamics of bullying, and online safety and cyber-bullying and strategies for reinforcing the curriculum at home; and
- (n) the specific steps that the District shall take to support vulnerable students and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies needed to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment.

(iii) Implementation of the Plan

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

(iv) Public Notice

The Wachusett Regional School District shall provide to all school staff annual written notice of the plan. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the plan applicable to the school. Relevant sections of the plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in a school district or school employee handbook. The plan shall be posted on the website of each school in the District.

Legal Refs: M.G.L. c.71, §37O; 603 CMR 49.00

Policy 6515 STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

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

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

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

Policy 6531.1 SOCIAL MEDIA

Section I: Introduction

The Wachusett Regional School District recognizes that our students must learn to utilize modern online tools for social and educational collaboration. These tools, include, but are not limited to:

- Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Email, chat, and other messaging technologies
- Message boards and forums
- Blogs and collaborative websites

Section II: Goals of the Policy

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee permits the use of social media platforms that support instructional opportunities and the social/emotional development of students. The District promotes educational uses of technology, including social media tools, along with appropriate training for students and staff on safety, proper use, and management of innovative learning tools.

Social media platforms will be used in District schools to achieve the following goals:

- Educate students, staff, and parents/guardians about the concerns and benefits of social media
- Access social media during and beyond the school day for educational purposes, social/emotional development, and other acceptable school-related

uses

- Explore ways to integrate social media with classroom teaching and learning
- Integrate student publication with authentic social media environments
- Encourage the use of technology-based interventions to support student learning
- Allow for ongoing interaction between students and teachers for appropriate school-related use
- Promote student interaction with peers, outside organizations, and professionals in a global community
- Offer and encourage student use of online resources to communicate and seek support for bullying and safety concerns
- Encourage parent/guardian interaction with teachers and schools through the use of digital communications and social media environments

Section III: Guidelines for Use of Social Media Platforms

Any use of social media platforms, whether in District schools or related to District programming, will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All use of social media tools must comply with District acceptable use policies, inclusive of but not limited to Policy 6532 Videotaping and Photographing of District Students and Policy 6531.2 BYOD (Bring Your Own Device).
- All staff and student online communication is subject to state and federal laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and District policies governing communication
- All staff and student online communication is subject to policies ensuring safe environments for students and staff free from bullying, harassment, and other forms of unwanted communication that threaten well-being and productivity
- Staff and District administration are encouraged to collaborate in developing social media tools
- Staff social media accounts used to communicate with current WRSD students will be established using District email accounts and will remain separate from any personal staff social media accounts
- Educational social media accounts maintained by staff members shall not contain personal information
- District staff shall not subscribe to students' personal postings in social media platforms not controlled or monitored by District staff

Policy 6531.2 BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)

The Wachusett Regional School District is committed to providing opportunities for students to utilize technology in order to:

- Gather and evaluate internet resources
- Create and share digital content
- Develop digital literacy
- Participate in a productive and respectful online environment

As part of this commitment, school administrators and teachers may allow students to use personally-owned devices and access school wireless networks to enhance instruction and learning. Permission to use such devices will be granted only when sufficient network resources are present. School administrators and teachers shall determine the extent to which the use of personal devices is permitted. However, such personal devices shall not be required by the District. Should students not have access to personal devices, or should they choose not to bring in their own devices, access will be made available by the District to complete assignments.

Access to District networks is a privilege which may be revoked at any time. Students must have explicit permission to use personal devices each time they are used. Students should assume that personal devices may not be used unless told otherwise. When explicit approval has NOT been granted, all devices must be turned off and put away. Recording audio, video or photographic images without the subjects' permission is not allowed in school at any time. (reference Policy 6532 Videotaping and Photographing of District Students). The use of personal devices in school is subject to the District's acceptable use policy regarding computers. This policy is outlined in each school's student handbook. In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the District will filter all internet content available to students. Any attempt to access inappropriate material will result in disciplinary action.

Student Responsibilities

- **Device Security** - As with any personal property, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that any personally-owned device is safe and secure. The District is not liable or responsible for damage, theft, or loss of any student-owned device or any information stored on a student-owned device.
- **Network Security** – Student devices shall have up-to-date antivirus protection. Computers or other devices infected with malicious software or lacking proper virus protection will not be allowed on school networks.
- **Technical Support** - The District does not have the resources to provide technical support for privately owned devices. Accordingly, District technology personnel will NOT attempt to troubleshoot or repair student-owned computers or other devices.
- **Cellular Data Charges** - Cellular devices may incur usage fees from cellular providers for texting or when accessing the internet without being properly connected to the school's internal wireless network. The District is not responsible for any charges related to texting or internet usage on student-owned devices.

Legal Refs: Title XVII – Children's Internet Protection Act

Policy 6562 ALTERNATE STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

It shall be expected that bus students will go to and from school by the same means on a daily basis. A parent or high school student may choose an alternate mode of transportation over which the school system has no authority. Therefore, a choice to use an alternative form of transportation other than the school bus shall be at the risk of the parent and the student.

Procedures for requesting alternate transportation to and from school shall be contained in the student handbook. The high school student will be responsible to inform parent/guardian on taking a late bus or alternate means of transportation

K-8 students will be required to present written permission notice to the school from parent/guardian when using alternate means of transportation.

In case of emergencies, oral notification will be an acceptable alternative with the administration making a written record of the notification.

All high school students applying for a parking sticker and using a personal vehicle to transport other students will be required to carry personal liability insurance on the vehicle in the amount of \$100,000 - \$300,000.

Policy 6611 STUDENT IMMUNIZATIONS

The Wachusett Regional School District is required, pursuant to MGL c.76 section 15 and its associated

regulations, 105 CMR 220.000, to keep an immunization record on file for each student enrolled in the school or system. The record must contain, at a minimum, the month and year of each immunization, and be signed by the healthcare provider. Immunization histories must be up to date for each child according to Immunization Guidelines published by the Commonwealth.

The Massachusetts School Immunization Law, M.G.L. c. 76 Section 15 provides that: “no child shall, except as hereinafter provided, be admitted to school except upon presentation of a physician’s certificate that the child has been successfully immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, and poliomyelitis and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health.”

Pursuant to the Massachusetts School Immunization Law quoted immediately above:

No unimmunized student shall be admitted to, or be allowed to remain in school, unless they can satisfy these requirements:

- A. A medical exemption is allowed if a healthcare provider submits documentation to school that an immunization is medically contraindicated; or
- B. A religious exemption is allowed if a parent submits a signed statement to the school stating immunizations are contrary to his/her sincere religious beliefs.
- C. Students who fall under **McKinney-Vento** Homeless Assistance Act of 2001.

Do note: Unimmunized students (including those with medical, religious exemptions, and those who fall under McKenney-Vento) who are otherwise exempt from the immunization law may be subject to exclusion from school if there is exposure to certain communicable childhood diseases, as specified in 105 CMR 300.200.

Do note: Philosophical exemptions are not allowed in Massachusetts even if signed by a physician. The documentation regarding the above qualified exemptions will be kept in the students’ files at school.

Policy 6613.2 ATHLETIC HEAD INJURY AND CONCUSSION POLICY

The safety of students is a high priority for the Wachusett Regional School District. Students who sustain head injuries while in extracurricular athletic activities and those involved in their treatment must follow the protocol based on 105 C.M.R 201.000 (<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/injury/105-cmr-201.pdf>) found online on the high school and middle schools’ websites as well as in the student handbooks.

Students who have sustained a head injury must be appropriately evaluated according to the protocol. In order to resume athletic activity, a medical clearance and authorization form must be submitted indicating that the student has recovered. Return to academics will be consistent with the protocol.

District administration, athletic staff, and nursing staff will review the protocol annually to ensure that it is current and reflects best practice. The School Committee will review and revise this policy as needed, but at least bi-annually.

Policy 6616 INSURANCE

The Wachusett Regional School District shall require each student participating in intramural programs and/or athletic teams to provide evidence of an active accident or health insurance policy covering the student.

Policy 6619 LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES

The Wachusett Regional School District is committed to providing a safe and healthy school environment for all students that is inclusive of school-wide practices that will minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to students while participating in all elements of the school day. School-wide practices along with identified accommodations, as deemed necessary by school personnel, parents/guardians and/or the student's physician, will provide all students the opportunity to participate fully in all school programs and activities. The successful management of this policy will require a partnership among the parents/guardians, the student, and all school personnel involved with the education, extra-curricular activities and the transportation of the student.

When it is determined by a physician that a student from the Wachusett Regional School District has a life threatening allergy and must have an Epinephrine Auto Injector, a 504 meeting will be convened to determine eligibility and the student's ability to successfully access all facets of the curriculum including extra-curricular activities. In the event that eligibility is determined, the 504 Plan will be communicated to professional staff of the building and all other school personnel who will have responsibility for the student throughout the course of the school day including but not limited to: teachers, bus drivers, playground monitors, cafeteria workers, substitute teachers and/or substitute nurse, and before and after school program monitors. In keeping with the 504 guidelines, this plan will be reviewed and revised annually.

At the start of every school year, the District health offices will provide allergy awareness training to staff in each building. All staff will learn how to minimize exposure to food and environmental allergens and to recognize the symptoms of anaphylaxis, the life threatening reaction that may occur with allergen exposure. Whenever it is possible to do so safely, the administration of the Epinephrine Auto Injector will be done by the certified school nursing staff or health care staff. Because a certified nurse or health care person may not be available to respond, staff will be trained on the administration of an Epinephrine Auto Injector. Whenever a new teacher or staff member is hired, the school nurse at his or her assigned school will provide that individual with Epinephrine training within five (5) days of beginning work. All staff and teachers must timely complete the Epinephrine administration training. The Superintendent will ensure that the District physician provides each school health office with the medical orders necessary to maintain a supply of all medications, including epinephrine as well as the ability to administer the epinephrine as necessary.

At the start of each school year, the health office will provide a list of all students who have life-threatening allergies to building administration, the main office secretary, the teachers, coaches, cafeteria staff, playground monitors, before and after school monitors, and the bus company. In an ongoing basis, the health office will maintain, update, and distribute a revised list of students with life threatening allergies. All coaches and paid co-curricular personnel must provide evidence that they have received their yearly training to administer an Epinephrine Auto Injector immediately upon the start of their employment or when requested by the District. If such personnel have not been trained to administer an Epinephrine Auto Injector, they must immediately request training through the District health offices. Volunteers leading co-curricular activities are encouraged to receive training.

In response to the presence of food-based allergies, parents/guardians may not send outside food/candy/drink to share in the classroom. As part of a District-wide initiative to discourage the use of food as a reward, both teachers and parents/guardians are encouraged to recognize and celebrate students by methods that do not involve food. For this same reason, any projects or classroom activities should also avoid the use of food items. Traditional school-based celebrations (i.e. the 8th grade cookout, etc) may be permitted with the permission of the Superintendent's office. Precautions will be

taken to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

The District's Policy for Bullying Prevention and Intervention, as well as all Student Handbook policies pertaining to the support of a safe and healthy school environment, should make reference to the safety and well being of those students with food and life threatening allergies.

Policy 6621 TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND SECURITY PROCEDURES

The Wachusett Regional School District and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing District requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the principal.

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

1. Children will be instructed as to the proper procedure for boarding and exiting from a school bus and in proper and safe conduct while aboard.
2. Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted at least twice a year to acquaint student riders with procedures in emergency situations.
3. All vehicles used to transport children will be inspected periodically for conformance with state and federal safety requirements.
4. Classroom instruction on school bus safety will be provided.

Policy 6631 NON-DISCRIMINATION

The WRSDC policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. If someone has a complaint or feels that they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, their complaint should be registered with a compliance officer.

The compliance officer's name and contact information may be obtained through the Superintendent's office or the District website.

Policy 6910 STUDENT RECORDS

The Wachusett Regional School District shall:

1. Take all reasonable precautions to preserve the confidentiality of a student's records.

2. Make available for inspection all school records of a student upon request of the parent or legal guardian.
3. Make available for inspection all school records of a student upon his or her request provided that the student is fourteen (14) years of age or older or upon entering the ninth grade.
4. Disseminate, to parents and students, State Regulations on Student Records and this policy annually.

Regulations:

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

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

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

The following is a summary of major parent and student rights regarding their student records:

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

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

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

The District Administration shall not release a student's social security number or date and place of

birth to anyone except as required by law.

Amendment of Record - The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have the right to request that information of the record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have a right to a conference with the school principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system.

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

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