

# **Worcester Public Schools**

## **Student Handbook**



**2021-22**

**Please Note:** The form located on the back of this Handbook must be signed and returned to your school.

**[www.worcesterschools.org/handbook](http://www.worcesterschools.org/handbook)**

# WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOL'S CALENDAR

## 2021-22

AUGUST 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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NOVEMBER 2021						
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FEBRUARY 2022						
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MAY 2022						
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SEPTEMBER 2021						
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DECEMBER 2021						
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MARCH 2022						
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JUNE 2022						
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JANUARY 2022						
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APRIL 2022						
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JULY 2022						
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30	31					

2021	2022
<p>August 26: Teacher/Staff Reporting</p> <p>August 27: Teacher/Staff Reporting</p> <p>August 30: First Day of School</p> <p>September 2: First Day for PreK &amp; K</p> <p>September 6: Labor Day</p> <p>October 8: Staff Development</p> <p>October 11: Columbus Day</p> <p>November 11: Veterans' Day</p> <p>November 24-26: Thanksgiving</p> <p>December 23-31: Holiday Vacation</p>	<p>January 1: New Year's Day</p> <p>January 17: Martin Luther King Day</p> <p>February 21: Presidents' Day</p> <p>February 22-25: Winter Vacation</p> <p>April 15: Non-School Day</p> <p>April 18: Patriots' Day</p> <p>April 19-22: Spring Vacation</p> <p>May 26: Last day of school for seniors</p> <p>May 30: Memorial Day</p> <p>June 14: Last day of school</p> <p>June 20: Juneteenth</p>
<p>☐ = DAYS WHEN SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION FOR STUDENTS</p> <p><i>*Last day of school may change in response to the number of snow days used during the school year</i></p>	
<p><b>End of Marking Quarters:</b> November 5, 2021    January 21, 2022    April 8, 2022    June 14, 2022 or last day of school</p>	

The Worcester Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer/Educational Institution and does not discriminate regardless of race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness. The Worcester Public Schools provides equal access to employment and the full range of general, occupational and vocational education programs. For more information relating to Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action contact Human Resource Manager, 20 Irving Street, Worcester, MA 01609, 508-799-3020.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Mayor Joseph M. Petty - Chairman

John L. Foley - Vice-Chairman

Dianna L. Biancheria

Laura B. Clancey

John F. Monfredo

Molly O. McCullough

Tracy A. O'Connell Novick

**SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE**

The Worcester Public Schools is pleased to present the 2021-22 Student Handbook to inform students and caregivers of the important policies and procedures that are in effect in our school system.

Thank you for reviewing this handbook with your child and for keeping it for future reference. Please note there have been revisions made to some of the policies and procedures from the previous year. We ask that you pay particular attention to those revisions.

Best wishes for a successful 2021-22 school year.  
Superintendent Maureen F. Binienda

**Handbook Updates**

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## **COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The district will follow state and federal guidelines to address COVID-19 related school issues. Due to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, the guidelines may change during the school year. The district will provide timely information to caregivers and students about any needed changes to district programs and services through postings on the Worcester Public Schools website ([worcesterschools.org](http://worcesterschools.org)), social media, and Connect-Ed messages.

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## **REGISTRATION**

### **Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center**

Open All Year Monday through Friday

8:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

768 MAIN STREET

SHATTUCK BUILDING

JACOB HIATT COMPLEX

Phone: (508) 799-3299, (508) 799-3068,

(508) 799-3069, (508) 799-3194

**In the event of extended school closure, online registration is available at <https://www.worcesterschools.org/enroll>**

In order to enroll a student in the Worcester Public Schools, the following documentation must be provided and verified:

Verification of:

1. Birth Certificate or Passport
2. Legal Guardianship or a responsible adult party in the household who can serve as an emergency contact.
3. Worcester residence (utility bill, lease, mortgage statement, etc.) or completed STUDENT ADDRESS VERIFICATION FORM
4. State mandated immunizations
5. Records from previous school, if available

The requirement for school immunizations and records may be temporarily waived for students who qualify as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or are in foster care.

### **Preschool—Grade 6**

All students (preschool through grade 6) registering for, or transferring into or within the Worcester Public Schools must do so at the Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center.

The Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center staff will:

- Provide information to caregivers regarding the student assignment policy
- Assist caregivers in selecting an educational environment most appropriate for their child's needs
- Assist caregivers in the initial stages of registration required by schools, i.e., documentation of birth and immunization, completion of Home Language Survey Forms, Medicaid eligibility, etc.
- Answer questions regarding school policies

### **Grades 7 – 12**

New students in grades 7-12 have the option to register at their respective high school. Potential English learners must complete registration at the Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center.

Students in grades 7-12 who are transferring within the Worcester Public Schools will do so at the appropriate middle or high school based on their new address.

### **Home Language**

State and federal regulations require that all schools determine the language(s)



spoken in each student's home in order to identify their specific language needs. If a language other than English is spoken in the home, the district is required to do further assessment to determine whether the student is an English Learner and to place the student in the appropriate instructional program to support content area and language learning.

### **Opt-Out Policy for English Learners (ELs)**

The Worcester Public Schools is committed to comply in good faith with all federal, state and local laws, rules and guidelines in the area of education for English Learners. Federal civil rights laws, namely, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), require schools to take appropriate steps to address the language barriers that prevent ELs from meaningfully participating in their education. Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71A and supporting regulations provide the state framework for the education of English learners in Massachusetts.

Caregivers of ELs may notify the district of their choice to have their child “opt-out” of English learner education programs. The decision to opt-out must be made by the caregivers (or students over 18 years of age) and must be **voluntary** and **informed**.

In opt-out cases, the district must inform the caregivers of the services the child would receive in the district’s English learner education programs, as well as the type of support that would be provided to the student if the caregivers decide to “opt-out” of English learner services.

A caregiver’s choice to opt-out means their child will not receive separate English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction focused on language development, but the district will provide the necessary support and actively monitor the student’s progress to ensure that the student’s English language and academic needs resulting from lack of English proficiency are met.

In order to comply with the laws, the following procedures shall be followed in every school building:

1. Caregivers who contact the school to request that their child opt-out of ESL services will be invited to attend a meeting at the school to include a school administrator and an ESL teacher. If the caregivers have identified in the Home Language Survey that they prefer an interpreter at meetings, the district shall provide an interpreter at the meeting.
2. No school personnel shall influence or encourage caregivers to request that their child opt-out of ESL services.
3. At the meeting, the district shall inform the caregivers of the services the child would receive in the district’s English learner education programs, as well as the type of support that would be provided to the students if the caregivers decide to opt-out.
4. If the caregivers are unable or unwilling to attend a meeting in person at the school, the school can offer an alternative means of meeting by telephone or otherwise.
5. The school shall provide the caregivers with the Opt-Out Form in the caregiver’s native language if the caregivers have indicated in the Home Language Survey that they seek written information in their native language.
6. The school shall retain a copy of the Opt-Out Form in the student’s cumulative file.

7. If the caregivers decide to opt-out of an English learner program, the school should place the student in an English language mainstream classroom with an SEI-endorsed teacher. The school may also provide support from a reading specialist or other specialist as appropriate in order to ensure that the student has access to the curriculum and is provided the same opportunities to master the same academic standards and curriculum framework as their native English-speaking peers.
8. The student will continue to be classified as an “EL” on district reports, and will continue to be assessed annually in their language proficiency with the state-mandated English language proficiency test, ACCESS for ELs 2.0. The caregivers will be notified of their child’s participation in such assessments, as well as assessment results.
9. The initial opt-out of a student remains active for one school year. According to new guidelines from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), caregivers are now required to complete a form **annually** requesting their child remain opted out of ESL services. The Annual Parent Choice Form also allows families who have previously made the decision to opt-out of ESL, an opportunity to reconsider ESL instruction for their child.

### Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements for School Year 2021-22

	Child Care/ Pre-K	Kindergarten	Grades 1-6	Grades 7-12
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses
<b>DTaP/DTP/ Td/Tdap</b>	>/=4 doses DTaP/DTP	5 doses DTaP/ DTP	>/=4 doses DTaP/DTP or  >/=3 doses TD	>/=4 doses DTaP/DTP or  >/=3 doses TD, plus 1 dose Tdap
<b>Polio</b>	>/=3 doses	4 doses	>/=3 doses	>/=3 doses
<b>Hib</b>	1 to 4 doses	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>MMR</b>	1 dose	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses
<b>Varicela</b>	1 dose	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses
<b>Meningococcal</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	1 dose grade 7 entry, 1 dose on or after 16 years of age or grade 11 entry

Students lacking proper documentation of required immunizations shall be excluded until proof of such immunization is provided (102 CMR 7.07 and 105 CMR 220.00). If a child cannot be immunized due to medical reasons, (requires physician documentation yearly) or if a caregiver refuses to have a child immunized because of religious beliefs (requires a caregiver-signed letter yearly), the non-immunized student will be excluded from school during outbreaks of diseases for which the student is not immunized (MGL c. 111, § 3, 6, 7, 109, 110, 112 and 105 CMR 300.00).

- **Lead Screening documentation is required of all students prior to entering Pre-K and/or kindergarten (105 CMR 460).**
- **Physical Examination documentation is required of all students entering grades K, 4, 7 and 9, and yearly for all student athletes.**

An **immunization clinic** is available for students at the Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center (PIC). All state-required immunizations are provided by an RN at no cost. Please refer to the WPS website for hours of operation or call the Parent Information Center at 508-799-3194.

## **Registration Policy Elementary (K-6)**

Students in the Worcester Public Schools shall attend schools based upon neighborhood district lines. They are also eligible to attend the five citywide magnet schools based on conditions of space availability and the magnet school being in compliance with the Worcester Public Schools' Deisolation Plan. The five citywide magnet schools are: (1) Chandler Magnet School, (2) City View Discovery School, (3) Jacob Hiatt Magnet School (4) Norrback Avenue School and (5) Worcester Arts Magnet School. Elementary students residing in the North quadrant are eligible to attend the North quadrant magnet school, Roosevelt School, based on space availability. Under the Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy, transfers are permitted to any school within that school's quadrant provided the transfer has a positive effect on the minority percentage of the school and space is available.

## **Secondary (Grades 7-12)**

Depending on the school district in which the student resides, they can attend their local high school. This is based on the quadrant of residence of the student at the time of enrollment, unless special permission has been requested by the caregiver and approved by the District Administration to attend a different school. Attendance at Worcester Technical High School is based upon an application and selection process approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

## **Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy**

### **I. Conditions for Out-of-District Transfers**

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools that students shall attend schools based upon neighborhood district lines. Exceptions to this policy are allowed under the "Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy" which permits transfers to other elementary, middle and high schools or to citywide magnet schools under the following conditions:

1. There must be space available in the receiving school.
2. Elementary, middle and high schools having a minority percentage greater than the citywide average on October 1 of each year will adhere to the following restrictions:
  - a. Minority students will not be allowed to transfer into a school which has a minority percentage greater than the citywide average on October 1 of each year.
  - b. Majority students will not be allowed to transfer out of a school except in the case where the sending school is in compliance and the receiving school is out of compliance as a result of having a minority percentage greater than 15 percentage points above the citywide minority percentage.

- c. All students, both minority and majority, shall be eligible to attend citywide magnet schools and secondary magnet schools. In order to exercise this eligibility, the magnet school must be in compliance.
3. Elementary, middle and high schools having a minority percentage less than the citywide average on October 1 of each year will adhere to the following restrictions:
  - a. Majority students will not be allowed to transfer into a school which has a minority percentage less than the citywide average on October 1 of each year.
  - b. Minority students will not be allowed to transfer out of a school except in the case where the sending school is in compliance and the receiving school is out of compliance as a result of having a minority percentage less than 15 percentage points below the citywide minority percentage.
  - c. All students, both minority and majority, shall be eligible to attend citywide magnet schools and secondary magnet schools. In order to exercise this eligibility, the magnet school must be in compliance.
4. Voluntary transfer requests will be considered for properly documented medical disabilities and other unique circumstances.
5. Spanish Bilingual, Structured English and Special Education Programs are offered in certain schools. Any student requiring these services will be enrolled in the school that will meet their assessed needs.
6. When a student changes residence and would enter grade 6, 8 or 12, they may finish the year in that school provided that they are a resident of Worcester and has received the out-of-district principal's permission to remain in that school.
7. Students who enroll in an out of district magnet program or the Worcester Technical High School must complete the year in the out-of-district school.

## **II. Procedures for Applying for a "Voluntary Transfer"**

1. Applications and a policy statement are available at the Parent Information Center or the Office for Instruction and School Leadership:
 

Parent Information Center:	(508) 799-3194
Burncoat/South Quadrants	(508) 799-3264
Doherty/North Quadrants:	(508) 799-3221
*Technical Quadrant:	(508) 799-3499

\*Applications for Worcester Technical High School may be obtained in all secondary guidance offices or at the Technical School Admissions Office.

2. The application must be filled out and returned to the appropriate office. Parent Information Center or the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.
3. A written approval or denial will be sent to the home of the caregiver and copies will be forwarded to the principals of both the sending and receiving schools.
4. A copy of the application and the approval or denial letter will be kept on file in the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.

## **III. Hardship Appeals Process**

If the caregiver disagrees with the decision of the Office for Instruction and School Leadership, an appeal must be filed before the first day of the school year. A maximum of two weeks will be allowed to appeal the decision in writing to the Chairperson of the Hardship Appeals Board, Parent Information Center, 768 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01610.

The board will review each case referred to it and make timely decisions relative to the disposition of the appeal. A copy of the decision will be sent to the caregiver

and the Office for Instruction and School Leadership. Proceedings of the Hardship Appeals Board will be recorded and maintained by personnel in the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.

## **Policy for Non-resident Foreign Students holding J-1 Visas**

### **Admission:**

- By the first week in January each Worcester Public School high school principal will determine how many spaces are available (no fewer than three) in their school to accommodate the admission of non-resident foreign students whose host family resides in their district (or who otherwise obtain special permission from the Managers for Instruction and School Leadership on a space available basis) **for the following school year**. No high school principal will enroll more than three non-resident foreign students until this determination is made and forwarded to the Managers for Instruction and School Leadership.

### **Criteria for Attendance:**

- Foreign exchange students must provide certified proof of prior academic performance from the high school(s) in their native country.
- Transcripts from intermediary or sponsoring agencies will not be accepted as appropriate documentation for determining past academic performance unless they bear the seal of the school and/or are presented in a sealed envelope from the school.
- Acceptance to the Worcester Public Schools will be on a one (1) year basis with the sponsoring organization or guardian required to reapply annually for continued study.
- Once admitted, the foreign student will be subject to all rules, policies, regulations and procedures as they relate to all students in the system.
- The system will provide an academic record of the foreign student's participation while a member of the system to the sponsoring organization or the caregiver, as required.
- Foreign students holding J-1 visas participating in this program are exempt from paying tuition.
- The system will award appropriate city (general) diplomas and/or school diplomas if students can demonstrate through appropriate documentation and verification that they have met the prerequisite requirements of the Worcester Public Schools.

## **School Choice**

The Worcester Public Schools participates in the Massachusetts School Choice program. The School Choice program allows caregivers to send their children to schools in communities other than the city or town in which they reside. For the 2021-22 school year, the School Committee has approved the following:

1. Student enrollment in the Inter-District School Choice program is based on availability and limited preference will be given to young siblings, if space is available.
2. Caregiver is responsible for transportation to the district school.
3. All Pre-K to Grade 12 schools participate in the program with the following exceptions:
  - a. Chapter 74 approved programs in the comprehensive high schools
  - b. Chapter 74 approved programs in the Worcester Technical High School

- c. Alternative Pathways Programs
  - d. Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) Pathway Programs
4. Students accepted into the Inter-District School Choice program may apply for schools on the same basis as resident students, but the Intra-District Choice Plan (Voluntary Transfer) may give preference to resident students in assigning students to schools.

To obtain information regarding the Inter-District School Choice program, please contact the **Parent Information Center** at 508-799-3194 or the **Office for Instruction and School Leadership** at 508-799-3499.

## STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools that the student and their caregiver hold the primary responsibility in determining the student's personal attire, hairstyle, jewelry, and personal items. The district's interest in student dress is to ensure that it contributes to a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment. The Worcester School Committee in its efforts to treat students equitably intends for the regulation of student dress to be free from bias.

Head coverings such as scarves, durags, hair wraps, cultural and religious headwear are permissible. Hats and bandanas are not permissible unless for medical reasons.

Clothing should include:

Top (shirt, blouse, sweater, tank)

Bottom (pants, shorts, skirt, dress)

Footwear (Suggested safe footwear must be worn in the school building.)

Clothing should provide appropriate body coverage. Bareback, midriff and low-cut shirts are not permitted. In addition, attire that reveals undergarments, and garments that are made of see-through materials (mesh, sheer fabrics) without a blouse/shirt underneath are not allowed. Clothing must cover undergarments when sitting, standing or bending.

Safe footwear must be worn in the school building. Seasonal footwear is recommended (example: boots and closed shoes to be worn in the winter).

Student clothing and jewelry shall be free of graphics/images that are obscene, violent, vulgar, sexist, racist and/or promote the use of illegal drugs/alcohol/tobacco and cause disorder or disrupt the educational process. Apparel that is gang, violence and/or cult related (refer to Rule 15) is not permitted.

Outerwear will not be worn in school buildings (example: jackets/parkas/windbreakers). Students may wear hooded sweatshirts or shirts but may not wear the hoods up or covering their heads or faces in the building or on school property. Earbuds or headphones may not be worn or used except when it is connected to a learning activity with permission of school personnel. Specific accommodations will be granted to students who require headphones to access their learning.

Students shall not be disciplined or removed from class as a consequence for a violation of the Dress Code Policy unless the infraction is a direct violation of the Worcester Public Schools' Code of Conduct Policy. If it is determined to be a violation, the school principal or their designee will determine the consequence for the student.

### **Career Vocational Technical Education Programs: Shop and Uniform Policy**

All trades require specific uniforms or clothing and adherence to workplace standards of appearance beyond the requirements for school dress. Shop instructors, with the respective trade department heads, identify the necessary dress.

Shop instructors, with the respective department heads, have a responsibility to provide a safe shop environment for all students. The Administration enforces these requirements.

### **Voluntary School Uniform Policy**

1. Voluntary uniform policies must comply with existing School Committee policies on student attire.
2. Prior to seeking School Committee approval, a majority of the school council members and the school principal must approve the school's voluntary uniform policy. The principal will forward the request to the Clerk of the School Committee who places it on the agenda for School Committee approval which then allows the school to implement the policy.
3. There will be no disciplinary action if a student does not adhere to the voluntary uniform policy.

### **POLICY REGARDING TELEVISED BROADCASTS**

Many times, the Worcester Public Schools extracurricular activities and programs are broadcast on Charter Channel 191 WEA-TV and participants may be shown in these broadcasts. Re-broadcasts of all programs may be made throughout the school year at unannounced times.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE**

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools that the Pledge of Allegiance be recited and a moment of silence be observed at all levels on a daily basis.

### **SAFETY AND BEHAVIOR**

#### **INTERNET SAFETY AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

##### **Purpose**

The Worcester Public Schools recognize the value of computer and other electronic resources to improve student learning and enhance the administration and operation of its schools. The Worcester Public Schools encourages the responsible use of computers; computer networks, including the internet; and other electronic resources in support of the mission and goals of our district.

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to transmit inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)]. The Worcester Public School system certifies that its schools have adopted and are enforcing Internet safety policies as part of Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act. Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) as amended in the Broadband Data Improvement Act [Pub. L. No. 110.385] to include educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response. The district has adopted curriculum to remain in compliance with the most recent FCC Report and order FCC 11-125.

## **Terms of Agreement**

In order to use networked and Internet resources, all students and caregivers must sign and return the signature page as contained on the back cover of the Student Handbook, and those under age 18 must obtain the caregivers permission.

## **Internet Safety**

The Worcester Public Schools is in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). The Worcester Public Schools will comply with any additional state and federal regulations that pertain to technology use within the district and through use of the Worcester Public Schools District network infrastructure and servers that is forthcoming from the local, state, and federal regulatory agencies.

A third party filtering system is in place that prevents accessing web pages that are 1) obscene, 2) pornographic, or 3) deemed harmful to minors. The district will monitor the online activities of users. The staff and students are advised never to access, keep or send anything that they would not want made public. While some pages are blocked by human intervention, other sites are blocked based on an algorithm that attempts to discern inappropriate sites. Best efforts are made to make the filtering as accurate as possible given the vast number of websites on the Internet. Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

## **Inappropriate Network Usage**

Staff and students should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. The Internet is to be used for constructive educational purposes only. Drives and files may be reviewed by network administrators occasionally to maintain system integrity.

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Worcester Public Schools online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: a) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities; and b) unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

## **Unacceptable Uses**

The activities listed below are not permitted. The list of activities described below is not meant to be comprehensive. The Worcester Public Schools reserves the right to make judgments both as to what constitutes inappropriate behavior and the consequences that apply.

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Giving personal information, such as full name, phone number, address or identifiable photo without permission from teacher and caregivers
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others (cyber-bullying)
- Damaging or modifying computers, computer systems or network resources, whether physically or through use of software means such as deletion, formatting, viruses, hacking, phishing, cracking ☐



- Attempting to bypass web content filters through proxy sites or other means
- Violating copyright laws
- Using others' passwords
- Trespassing in others' folders, work, or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Installing any software, shareware or freeware without Principal approval and installation by on-site contact person
- Employing the network for commercial purposes, financial gain or fraud

The network, wired and wireless, is for educational uses only. Any non WPS device on the Worcester Public Schools network shall be used for educational purposes only. Non educational use is prohibited.

### **Penalties**

Violation of any terms set forth in this policy may result in the loss of Worcester Public Schools computer network privileges, disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action.

### **Electronic Messaging Guidelines**

The Worcester Public Schools contracts with a vendor to provide emergency and informational calls, texts and emails. The Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 "TCPA" (and subsequent amendments) was created to prevent consumers from receiving "robo" marketing calls from telemarketers. By signing the student handbook, you are providing prior express consent for the school district to contact you and your family via phone, email or text message for emergency and informational purposes. If you would like to opt-out of receiving informational messages, you can do so at [www.worcesterschools.org/tcpa](http://www.worcesterschools.org/tcpa). Emergency messages will continue to be sent to the contact numbers provided, as authorized under TCPA.

Note: Worcester Public Schools' teaching staff is not contractually obligated to check email or other electronic messaging systems. Please contact your child's teacher personally to confirm whether they utilize these systems. When using email, please follow these important guidelines: Email is not confidential. Teachers will not respond via email to discuss contentious, emotional, or highly confidential issues. These issues are to be handled by phone or personal contact. Emails should be used for general information that is non-vital. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your child is not to go home on the bus. A teacher may not read the message in time. A phone call should be made to make sure your message is clearly received.

### **Adoption**

The School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools adopted this Internet Safety and Acceptable Use Policy at a public meeting following normal public notice on May 21, 2009. This amended policy was adopted by the School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools on June 5, 2014.

### **Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)**

The Worcester Public Schools utilizes a number of computer software applications and web-based services to supplement educational services provided by school-based staff. While these tools are reviewed to ensure that they provide students with effective tools for learning, the applications and services are not operated by the district but by third parties. In order for students to use these programs and services, certain personal identifying information – typically the student's name and e-mail address – may be provided to the website/application operator. The Worcester Public Schools enters into a data sharing agreement with

third parties to ensure student data is handled in a manner not in violation of federal requirements.

Under the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), the websites/application operators must provide caregiver notification and obtain consent before collecting personal information from children under the age of 13. The law permits school districts to consent to the collection of personal information on behalf of its students thus eliminating the need for individual caregivers to consent directly to individual website/application providers.

A list of the sites used in our classrooms with links to privacy policies, terms of service and our data share agreements can be found on our Student Data Privacy Consortium website:

[https://sdpc.a4l.org/district\\_search.php?state=MA&districtID=786](https://sdpc.a4l.org/district_search.php?state=MA&districtID=786)

If a caregiver wishes for their child to be removed from specific third party services, an opt-out form can be obtained at the above district website. Completed forms should be returned to the school principal.

### **Science Laboratory Safety**

Science is taught using an inquiry based approach in the Worcester Public Schools. This can be done safely only with the cooperation of students to the teacher's directions and procedures. It is the responsibility of students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in the lab setting. Students are expected to:

1. Sign a safety contract which emphasizes their responsibilities in the science lab;
2. Have caregivers co-sign the contract to alert them to these responsibilities;
3. Be aware of measures to be taken should an accident occur;
4. Know classroom evacuation procedures in case of an emergency;
5. Use protective equipment (gloves, aprons, goggles, etc.) provided as instructed; and
6. Refrain from eating and drinking in the laboratory.

## **SECURITY MEASURES**

### **Crisis Prevention and De-escalation (Physical Restraint)**

The Board of Education adopted new regulations on the use of physical restraint in public education programs. The regulations (603 CMR 46.00) are meant to promote safety for all students. Physical restraint shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be used only when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances. Mechanical restraints, medication restraints and seclusion are prohibited in all public education programs.

The amended regulations may be found at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html?section=all>

### **Security Cameras in Schools**

The School Committee works to maintain a safe and secure environment for its students, staff, visitors, and facilities. Security means more than having locks and making certain that doors are locked at the proper times. Security also means minimizing fire hazards, reducing the possibility of faulty equipment, keeping

records and valuables in a safe place, protection against vandalism and burglary, the prosecution of vandals, and developing crisis plans.

School facilities and their contents, constitute one of the greatest investments of the community. The School Committee believes it to be in the best interest of students and taxpayers for the district to exert every reasonable means to protect the investment adequately.

In pursuit of this objective, the School Committee authorizes the use of security cameras in school district buildings and on its property to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all students, staff and visitors, to deter theft, vandalism and other negative behavior, to safeguard district buildings, grounds and equipment, and to monitor unauthorized individuals in or on school property. Security cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent of Schools in consultation with school officials as well as local law enforcement and emergency response agencies. They may be used in any area, inside or outside of school buildings where there is no reasonable expectation of privacy.

The district shall notify students and staff through student and employee handbooks and appropriate signage that security cameras have been installed and may be used at any time. Students or staff identified on security cameras in violation of School Committee policies will be subject to disciplinary action.

The Superintendent shall ensure that proper procedures are in place and are followed regarding use, viewing, disclosure, retention, disposal and security of video recordings or photographs from security cameras in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. A video recording used for security purposes in school district buildings and/or on school property shall be the sole property of the school district. All video recordings will be stored in their original format and secured to avoid tampering and to ensure confidentiality in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Access to video recordings from security cameras shall be limited to school administrators (Superintendent/designee, School Principal/designee). Law enforcement and emergency response officials shall be granted access to video recordings or the security system after giving prior notice to the Superintendent/designee.

The Superintendent may, from time to time, issue further guidance that is consistent with current laws and this policy.

### **Emergency Plans**

Advance planning for emergencies and disasters is essential to provide for the safety of students and staff; it also strengthens the morale of all concerned to know that plans exist and that students/staff have been trained in carrying out the plans.

The Superintendent shall review annually the safety plan with local police and fire officials. Building principals will meet all requirements for conducting fire drills and emergency response drills to give students practice in moving with orderly dispatch to designated areas under emergency conditions, and the staff practice in carrying out their assigned responsibilities for building evacuation.

### **Student Lockers**

All lockers available to students are the property of the Worcester Public Schools. Use of lockers by students is regulated by the school administration and all lockers are subject to inspection by the school administration when deemed appropriate.

Any student assigned a locker must use a school issued lock. The administration will remove all non-school issued locks. If a locker is not used/assigned, the administration will secure it with a lock.

Students must store all book bags, gym bags, and outerwear (coats and jackets) in their lockers during the school day.

For security reasons, students will not be permitted to wear outerwear (coats and jackets) during the school day. Students will be permitted to carry backpacks made of a mesh or transparent material at the secondary level.

Any weapon, drugs or other prohibited items or substances found in a locker in violation of school policy may be considered to be the property of the student assigned to the locker for purposes of disciplinary action under this code.

### **Access to Students During School Hours**

The Legal Office of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has supported the present policy of the Worcester Public Schools regarding permitting persons to meet with students during school hours without the caregivers permission.

The following persons may be granted access to students during school hours:

1. The custodial caregiver (the caregiver with physical custody more than 50% of the time) or guardian or personnel or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the child in place of or in conjunction with the caregiver. According to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, §34H, the noncustodial caregiver must submit a written request to the school principal for such access. For further information, contact your child's principal.
2. A student, age 14, or upon entering grade 9, may consent to meet with an individual.
3. Certain individuals, including school personnel, police, and employees of certain state agencies may be granted access to students in the performance of their official duties. This information can be viewed at <https://worcesterschools.org/wp-content/uploads/handbook/Access%20to%20Students%20During%20School%20Hours.pdf>

**If any court ordered restrictions exist regarding access to your child, it is imperative that you provide the WPS a copy of the order so that we can comply with the order of the court.**

### **Dismissal of Students**

1. Students may only be dismissed to persons specified by the caregivers in writing. Principals may remind families to update student emergency contact information to include a robust network of persons who may be called in case of an emergency.
2. Caregivers may be provided with a Caregiver Affidavit to designate someone to make educational and/or medical decisions for a child if the child is temporarily living with someone who is not the caregiver.

### **Handling of Students Whose Caregivers Have Been Detained or Taken Into Custody**

If a school receives notification that the caregiver of a student has been detained or taken into custody by immigration law enforcement officials or agents, the school will take the following steps:

1. Contact the person(s) listed on the student's emergency card to inform the person(s) of the situation and ask if they can retrieve the student;
2. Make arrangements for school counselors to be available to support the student;
3. Contact DCF if there is no responsible adult authorized by the caregivers to receive the student;
4. Consult with the district's homeless liaison if the student becomes homeless as a result of their caregiver's detention.

### **Visitors in the Schools**

All Worcester Public Schools are posted with signs requiring that all visitors must report to the Office of the Principal. This ensures that the school administration knows who is visiting in the building, the reason for the visit, and if the timing of the visit is appropriate.

The following sign-in procedures will be adhered to upon entering a school building:

- Enter through the front door (some schools have Intercom Systems that will allow you to enter after ringing a bell and identifying yourself)
- Go immediately to the front office
- Please sign in at the register
- Affix a Visitor's Tag on a visible area of your attire
- Wait for further instructions from the school clerk or administrator on how to proceed to the respective visiting area or classroom

Any other entry into a school building by visitors will be considered trespassing. Intruders into the building are immediately asked to leave, and if they refuse to do so, local law enforcement officials are contacted for assistance. Trespassing laws will be enforced in accordance with this policy.

### **Use of Motor Vehicles**

Students are extended the privilege of bringing automobiles to school as long as they respect the safety of others and obey these basic rules:

1. Automobiles must be parked in the assigned student parking areas.
2. Students who leave the campus in motor vehicles during the school hours without following established dismissal procedures will be suspended.
3. Idling of a motor vehicle engine in excess of 5 minutes is prohibited on school property. Violators will be fined.
4. Students must drive slowly and carefully on or near school grounds, always remembering that pedestrians have the right of way.
5. Cars may not be visited during the school day except with principal's approval
6. Parking privileges will be revoked or suspended for the following reasons:
  - a. Speed in excess of 15 m.p.h.
  - b. Any act endangering life or property while on school grounds.
  - c. Parking in areas other than student parking areas.
7. Parking privileges will not be available without an appropriate school registration and parking permit.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Philosophy**

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools to ensure fair and effective disciplinary practices. Every student has a right to an education in a safe, secure and supportive environment, and every teacher has a right to expect respectful, prepared students in their classroom.

A key aspect of a student's education is the acquisition of social and behavioral skills, since effective learning can only occur when students obey basic rules of conduct. This means that:

1. Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that is in the best interest of the school and its students.
2. Caregivers have a responsibility to develop positive attitudes toward study and behavior.
3. Teachers have a responsibility to continue behavior development through teaching and discipline in the classroom.
4. The Administration and the School Committee have a responsibility to support and maintain the enforcement of discipline within the school buildings through policies and practices that are designed to use discretion and to re-engage the student in the learning process.

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws, requires 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 Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Such provisions will also be made, when appropriate, for students with a disability who are receiving accommodations or related services under a 504 plan.

The Code of Conduct is based on a system of progressive discipline with a goal of limiting the use of long-term suspension as a consequence for student misconduct until other consequences have been considered, as appropriate. The administrator will exercise discretion in determining disciplinary consequences.

The administrator may utilize their discretion to significantly increase penalties in the cases of second and third offenses or for other factors. In determining the severity of the penalty or suspension, the appropriate administrator may consider all relevant facts, including but not limited to: 1) previous disciplinary record, 2) severity of disruption to the educational process, 3) degree of danger to self and/or others, 4) the degree to which the student is willing to change their inappropriate behavior and 5) whether alternative consequences are appropriate to reengage the student in learning.

### **School-Imposed Discipline**

**Expulsion** means the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under MGL c. 71, §§37H or 37H½ for: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a principal or their designee determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in MGL c. 71, §§37H or 37H½ .

**In-school suspension** means removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. In-school suspension for ten (10) days or less, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, shall not be considered a short-term suspension under these regulations. If a student is placed in in-school

suspension for more than ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, such suspension shall be deemed a long-term suspension for due process, appeal, and reporting purposes under 603 CMR 53.00.

**Short-term suspension** means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

**Long-term suspension** means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense set forth in subsections (a) or (b) of MGL c. 71, §37 H, or in section 37H ½ of MGL c. 71, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety (90) school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension under section MGL c. 71 §37H ¾ shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

**Other Discipline:** Demerits or detentions may be imposed for infractions of these rules at the school level. Alternative consequences may be used, as appropriate, and include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Participation in clubs and activities at Worcester Public Schools and attending school-sponsored, school-related events is a privilege afforded to students who remain in good standing. To participate in school activities, events and clubs, students are expected to maintain good attendance and demonstrate good behavior and citizenship during school and at school-sponsored events. Eligibility for participation in activities, events, clubs, awards, scholarships and honorary positions at Worcester Public Schools is limited to students who are currently enrolled in and attending Worcester Public Schools in good standing. Students not meeting these expectations may be excluded at the discretion of the principal or their designee. If a student is suspended from an extracurricular activity, at the determination of the principal, the student may be excluded from that specific type of event involving the student's school of enrollment for the remainder of the school year. A student's removal from extracurricular activities and attendance at school sponsored events is not subject to the procedural requirements of MGL c. 71 §37H ¾ (Principal's Hearing). The removal is not a suspension for the purpose of counting the school days that a student is suspended. Caregivers will be notified when a student is removed or excluded from extracurricular activities.

School discipline shall not include the right to inflict corporal punishment. However, reasonable force may be used as necessary to protect other students or other persons from assault or the imminent threat of bodily injury.

School Officials may legally search a student and confiscate property provided:

1. there are reasonable grounds to suspect a search will turn up evidence tending to show that the student has violated or is violating the law or the school's rules; and

2. the search as conducted is reasonably related in scope to the circumstances that justified the search in the first place.

### **Disruptive Conduct**

Violation of any of the following rules is grounds for discipline as defined above and pertains to actions both on or off school grounds during school or school-related situations.

#### **Rule 1. – Damage or Destruction of School Property**

A student shall not steal or cause damage to school property, nor make such attempts. The Administration reserves the right to file criminal complaints against, and seek restitution from, any student who violates this rule.

#### **Rule 2. – Damage or Destruction of Private Property, Cheating, Forgery, Plagiarism**

A student shall not steal or cause damage to private property nor make such attempts during school situations on or off school grounds or at any school-related situations including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. A student shall not cheat, forge or plagiarize any work submitted for academic credit or documentation.

#### **Rule 3. – Physical Assault on a School Employee**

A student shall not use or attempt to use physical force against a school employee or cause or attempt to cause physical injury to a school employee on or off the school grounds or during school situations or school-related situations including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. Any student who assaults any school employee or any student who assaults a principal, teacher, instructional assistant, or other educational staff on school premises or at school sponsored or school related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion or a long-term suspension from the school by the school principal.

#### **Rule 4. – Physical Assault on a Student or Other Person not Employed by the School**

A student shall not use or attempt to use physical force against a student or other person or cause or attempt physical injury to another student or any other person on or off school grounds at any school-related situation including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation.

#### **Rule 5. – Verbal Assault on a School Employee**

A student shall not assault verbally any school employee on or off school grounds at any school related situation including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. Verbal assault means obscenity, bullying or abusive language. Abusive language shall include but not be limited to derogatory statements concerning race, sexual orientation, color, gender, age, religion, gender identity, national origin or disability.

#### **Rule 5A. – Threatening a School Employee**

A student shall not threaten any teacher, administrator, or other school employee or volunteer with physical harm so as to place such person in reasonable apprehension that force will be used to inflict such physical harm.



**Rule 6. – Verbal Assault on, or Threat to, a Student or Non-employee of School**

A student shall not assault verbally any person on or off school grounds at any school-related situation including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. Verbal assault means obscenity, bullying or abusive language. Abusive language shall include but not be limited to derogatory statements concerning race, sexual orientation, color, gender, age, religion, gender identity, national origin or disability.

**Rule 6A. - Written Assault or Threat on a Student or Non-employee of School**

A student shall not threaten, intimidate or bully in writing, any person on or off school grounds at any school-related situation including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. Written threats mean any messages including e-mail, text messaging or any other cyber-related forms of communication; e.g. chat rooms.

**Rule 7. - Policy on Possession or Use of Weapons**

If any device which may be considered a weapon under this policy is distributed by a teacher, for use in the classroom, then no student receiving such a device shall be charged with an offense under Rule 7 provided the device remains in the classroom and provided the device is only used for the classroom purpose.

A student shall not possess, use, or attempt to use, any weapon on school premises or at a school related situation, including but not limited to travel to and from the situation.

In order to protect the students of the Worcester Public Schools, any student who is found on school premises or at school sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including but not limited to, a gun or a knife may be subject to expulsion or a long-term suspension from the school by the principal regardless of the size of the knife.

For purposes of this policy, a dangerous “weapon” includes but is not limited to a gun (including a B.B., pellet or other replica device), knife, sling shot, blowgun, blackjack, metallic knuckles including a ring intended to be worn on more than one finger (“fused rings”) or knuckles or any substance which could be put to the same use with the same or similar effect as metallic knuckles, nunchaku, zoobow, also known as klackers or kung fu sticks, or any similar weapon consisting of two sticks of wood, plastic or metal connected at one end by a length of rope, chain, wire or leather, a shuriken or any similar pointed star-like object intended to injure a person when thrown, or any armband, made with leather which has metallic spikes, points or studs or any similar material weighted with metal or other substance and worn on the hand, or a manrikigusari or similar length of chain having weighted ends. Any other device or object used or attempted to be used to inflict bodily harm on a person may be considered a weapon.

This policy will be implemented according to the due process provisions of the WPS Discipline Code applicable to Regular and Special Education students.

**Rule 8. - Policy on Possession or Use of Drugs or Alcohol**

- a. Any student who distributes or possesses, with intent to distribute, any controlled substance as defined in MGL c. 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, or heroin, on school premises or at a school sponsored activity, may be expelled or have a short-term or long-term suspension imposed from the Worcester Public Schools by the school principal. This applies to drug paraphernalia such as scales, grinders, pipes, electronic smoking devices and any and all instruments used for drug products.
- b. Any student who uses or possesses any controlled substance as defined in

MGL c. 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine or heroin, or is under the influence of such a substance on school premises or at a school sponsored activity may be subject to expulsion or a short-term or long-term suspension from school by the school principal.

- c. Possession or use of alcohol on the premises of the Worcester Public Schools is forbidden. Any student who uses or possesses alcohol on school premises, or at a school sponsored activity, or is under the influence of alcohol on school premises, or a school sponsored situation, may be subject to a short-term or a long-term suspension imposed from the Worcester Public Schools.
- d. This policy will be implemented subject to the due process provision of the Worcester Public Schools Discipline Code applicable to Regular and Special Education students. Any student charged with a violation of Rule 8 shall have the due process rights outlined in Due Process, Section III.
- e. Possession or use of drugs or controlled substances which are medically prescribed is not a violation of this policy. However, all prescribed medications will be administered to students by authorized school personnel and will be kept in a secure location.

#### **Rule 9. - Excessive Tardiness**

A student shall not be tardy from school or class without legitimate cause.

#### **Rule 10. – Repeated School Violations**

A student shall not repeatedly fail to comply with directions and reasonable requests of any authorized school personnel during any period of time they are under school supervision.

#### **Rule 11. - Hazing**

A student shall not organize or participate in hazing. A student with knowledge of any hazing activity must report the incident to the school administrator.

#### **Rule 12. - Sounding False Alarms**

A student shall not, without reasonable cause, by outcry, bells, or otherwise cause a false alarm of fire (such action shall be reported under MGL c. 269, §13). No student shall set a fire in a school building or at a school-sponsored site or situation.

#### **Rule 13. - Smoking and Tobacco Products**

Smoking, possession, use, or distribution of tobacco or tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping devices within school buildings, school facilities, school grounds, on school buses or at a school sponsored activity by any person are prohibited. Any student who violates this rule may be suspended.

#### **Rule 14. - Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Laser Pointing Devices**

While on school premises or at a school sponsored event during the school day, a student shall not, without expressed permission of appropriate school personnel, use any cell phone, smart phone, tablet, camera or any other type of electronic device which may potentially be disruptive of school activities or a distraction to students. Electronic devices shall include any cell phone, smart phone, tablet or anything powered by electricity and is suitable for communicating any oral, voice, audio or text messages or postings or for recording or communicating any audio, voice, picture, image or video imagery.

**Students should also be aware that recording an individual without their consent could result in criminal charges under MGL CH. 272.**

Use of such devices in violation of this rule may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, out-of-school suspension time. The School Administration reserves the right to confiscate cellular phones or other electronic devices when a student is believed to be violating this rule.

A student shall not use or possess a laser pointing device of any type on school premises or at a school sponsored event, unless such device is distributed by a teacher or its use is authorized by a teacher in connection with school work. Use of a laser pointing device against the face, eyes, or head of another individual may be considered a weapon for disciplinary purposes including, but not limited to, the possibility of long-term suspension.

### **Enforcement and Penalties:**

This cell phone policy may be enforced by the principal, any teacher (including substitutes) or by any other school official or employee designated by the principal.

Enforcement personnel shall have the right to confiscate any cell phone or electronic device possessed or used in violation of the Code of Conduct.

Penalties for students found in violation of the policy will be as follows:

1. First offense: Student's cell phone/electronic device will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day.
2. Second and subsequent offenses: Student's cell phone/electronic device will be confiscated and returned only to the student's caregivers. Any such caregiver may, within five days of any such confiscation, request a hearing to determine the validity of the violation of the Code of Conduct and resulting confiscation of the cell phone/electronic device. In such event the principal shall designate a hearing officer who shall: 1) give the student and/or their caregivers an opportunity to present their case; 2) hear or review the incident report from the enforcing person and any other person with relevant information; and 3) provide a recommendation to the principal as to whether there is a reasonable basis to conclude that the cell phone policy of the Code of Conduct was violated by the student. Regardless of any request for a hearing, any confiscated cell phone/electronic device shall be returned to the caregiver at the first opportunity and shall not be dependent on the scheduling or outcome of any hearing.
3. Students committing repeated violations of this policy may be subject to additional disciplinary action, consistent with the Worcester Public Schools Code of Conduct up to and including suspension from school.

### **Rule 15. - Policy on Gangs and Obscene Clothing**

1. No student on school property or at any school sponsored function shall wear any article of clothing (including hats, bandanas, scarves and sweatbands), jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol or sign which has wording, or designs that are reasonably deemed by the school administration to be obscene, lewd or vulgar and which causes disorder or disruption to the school environment.
2. No student on school property or at any school sponsored function shall wear any article of clothing (including hats), jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol or sign, which displays, evidences or advertises alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, illegal drugs, or other controlled substances illegal under Massachusetts law.

3. No student on school property or at any school sponsored function shall wear any article of clothing (including hats), jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol or sign which the school administration reasonably deems to be evidence of membership or affiliation in any gang. As defined in this policy a “gang” is any group of two or more persons affiliated together, either formally or informally, whose purposes include the commission of illegal acts or who in concert commit illegal acts.

#### **Rule 16. - Students Charged with or Convicted of a Felony**

In accordance with MGL c. 71 §37 H ½ principals have the authority to suspend students charged with a felony and expel or impose a long-term suspension for students convicted or adjudicated of committing a felony if the principal has determined that the student’s continued presence would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Any student charged with a violation of Rules 3, 7, 8 and 18 shall have the due process rights outlined in Due Process, Section III.

#### **Rule 17. - Disruption of School**

1. In addition to complying with Rules 1 through 15 stated above, a student shall not use violence, force, threat, fear, passive resistance or any other conduct in order to cause the disruption or obstruction of any lawful mission, process, or function in school.
2. Students are not permitted in any area of the school building/grounds without supervision by a staff person of the WPS before, during and after normal school hours. Students are not permitted access to the school building/grounds until 30 minutes before the official start of the school day or when personnel of the Worcester Public Schools are available for supervision.

#### **Rule 18. - Bomb Threats**

No student shall communicate or cause to be communicated any information in any form whatsoever that a bomb or any type of explosive device is located in or on any building or property under the control of the Worcester Public Schools or is at any school sponsored situation, including but not limited to transportation provided by the Worcester Public Schools, either directly or by contracted services.

#### **Rule 19. - Fighting**

A student shall not engage in physical altercation with another student on or off school grounds at any school-related activity or event including, but not limited to, travel to and from the activity or event.

#### **Rule 20. - Inciting a Disturbance**

A student shall not incite a disturbance on or off school grounds at any school related activity or event. A student shall not organize, encourage, or participate in a disturbance or disruption of school. It can apply to one who urges or instigates others to disturb the school setting or related activity.

#### **Rule 21. - Leaving School without Permission**

A student shall not leave the school grounds or school-related activity without permission from the school administration.

#### **Rule 22. - Lab and Shop Safety**

A student shall comply with all standards of safety in a lab or shop setting.

Students are expected to behave appropriately in these settings without causing any unsafe situation that may cause harm to self or others.

### **Rule 23. - Bullying and Harassment**

A student shall not engage in conduct that constitutes bullying or harassment in school, at school events or activities, or outside of school if the conduct creates a hostile or disruptive environment at school.

## **LEGAL POLICIES**

### **Due Process**

The Code of Conduct of the Worcester Public Schools is administered within the framework of the United States Constitution and federal and state laws and regulations with regard to due process for students. The Code of Conduct is intended to be administered for disciplinary infractions that occur on school grounds or at school-sponsored events (on and off school grounds) OR for disciplinary infractions that occur off school grounds but substantially disrupt the educational environment or create a hostile environment at school. The Code of Conduct applies during remote learning opportunities and events.

The Worcester Public Schools adheres to the Student Discipline Laws and Regulations as set forth in MGL c. 71 §§37H, 37 H½ and 37 H ¾ and 603 CMR 53.00 et seq.

### **Section I**

#### **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES:**

A student may be removed from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for up to ten (10) consecutive school days or up to ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Students who are placed in in-school suspension shall have the opportunity to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the in-school suspension.

A student who is unable to adhere consistently to acceptable classroom standards in a particular class may be removed from the class permanently and assigned to a different class at the discretion of the principal and/or their designee.

#### **Notice of In-School Suspension:**

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

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal or their designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the caregiver orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension.

On the day of the suspension, the principal or their designee shall send written notice (by hand-delivery, first class mail or email) to the student and caregiver including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the caregiver to a meeting if the meeting has not already occurred. The notice shall be in English and the primary language of the home if another language is identified in the home language survey, or by other means, as appropriate.

**Caregiver Meeting:**

The principal or their designee shall also invite the caregiver to a meeting (in person or by telephone) to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal or their designee is unable to reach the caregiver after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the caregiver of the in-school suspension.

**No Right to Appeal:**

The decision of the principal or their designee is the final decision for in-school suspensions not exceeding ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year.

**Section II****OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES FOR OFFENSES UNDER MGL c. 71 §37H ¾:****Due Process Procedures for Out-of-School Suspensions:**

There are two types of out-of-school suspensions, short-term suspensions and long-term suspensions. The principal or their designee shall determine the extent of the rights to be afforded the student at a disciplinary hearing based on the anticipated consequences for the disciplinary offense. If the consequence may be long-term suspension from school, the principal or their designee shall afford the student additional rights as described below, in addition to those rights afforded to students who may face a short-term suspension from school. All students facing out-of-school suspension shall have the right to oral and written notice, as described below.

**Notice for any Out-of-School Suspension:**

Prior to suspending a student, the principal or their designee will provide the student and the caregiver oral and written notice of the possible suspension, an opportunity for the student to have a hearing and the opportunity for the caregivers to participate in the hearing. The notice will be in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English as identified in the home language survey, or by other means of communication where appropriate. The notice for every potential out-of-school suspension will set forth in plain language:

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal or their designee concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the caregiver to attend the hearing; the date, time, and location of the hearing; and the right of the student and the student's caregiver to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

If the student is placed on long-term suspension following the hearing with the principal, the student shall be provided notice of the rights described above, and also the following rights:

1. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
2. The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/caregiver's expense;
3. The right to produce witnesses on their behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so;
4. The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
5. The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal and to receive a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or caregiver upon request. If the student or caregiver requests an audio recording, the principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and the caregiver upon request;
6. The right to appeal the principal's decision to the Superintendent or their designee.

The principal or their designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the caregiver orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. Prior to conducting a hearing without the caregiver present, the principal or their designee will document reasonable efforts to include the caregiver. The principal or their designee is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal or their designee has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the caregiver in the manner specified by the caregiver for emergency notification.

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

#### **Emergency Removal of Student:**

Under certain emergency circumstances, it may not be practical for the principal or their designee to provide prior oral and written notice before removing a student from school. The principal or their designee may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's or their designee's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The principal or their designee will immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall:

- a) Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's caregiver of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, the potential consequences, including potential length of suspension, the opportunity for a hearing including the date/time/location of the hearing, the right to interpreter services, and other rights permitted for students who may be placed on short or long-term suspension as set forth in 603 CMR 53.08;
- b) Provide written notice to the student and caregiver, including the information described in 603 CMR 53.06(2);

- c) Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the principal or their designee that complies with 603 CMR 53.08(2) or 53.08(3), as applicable, and the caregiver an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and the caregiver.
- d) Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(2)(c) and 53.08(2)(d) or 603 CMR 53.08(3)(c) and 53.08(3)(d), as applicable.

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

#### **SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION PROCEDURES UNDER MGL c. 71 §37H ¼:**

A short-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. Any student facing a potential short-term suspension is entitled to a hearing with the principal or their designee with the following process:

#### **Principal Hearing - Short-term Suspension:**

- a) The purpose of the hearing with the principal or their designee is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, the consequences for the infraction. At a minimum, the principal or their designee shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts that the principal or their designee should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as alternatives to suspension. The principal or their designee shall provide the caregiver, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- b) Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal or their designee shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.
- c) The principal or their designee shall notify the student and caregiver of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as provided in 603 CMR 53.13(1). The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.
- d) If the student is in a preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.



**No Right to Appeal:**

The decision of the principal or their designee is the final decision for short-term out-of-school suspensions not exceeding ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year.

**LONG-TERM SUSPENSION PROCEDURES UNDER MGL c. 71 §37H ¾:**

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense set forth in MGL c. 71, §37 H, or in MGL c. 71 §37H ½, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed. Any student facing a potential long-term suspension is entitled to a hearing with the principal or their designee with the following process:

**Principal Hearing - Long-term Suspension:**

- a) The purpose of the hearing with the principal or their designee is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, the consequences for the infraction. At a minimum, the principal or their designee shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal or their designee should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as alternatives to suspension. The principal or their designee shall provide the caregiver, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- b) In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following additional rights:
  1. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
  2. The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student choice, at the student's/caregiver's expense;
  3. The right to produce witnesses on their behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so;
  4. The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
  5. The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal or their designee, and to receive a copy of the audio record upon request. If the student or caregiver requests an audio record, the principal or their designee shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and caregiver, upon request.

- c) The principal or their designee shall provide the caregiver, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- d) Based on the evidence, the principal or their designee shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The principal or their designee shall send the written determination to the student and caregiver by hand-delivery, first-class mail or email to an address provided by the caregiver for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal or their designee and the caregiver. If the principal or their designee decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:
  - 1. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
  - 2. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal or their designee;
  - 3. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
  - 4. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive educational services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school;
  - 5. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's or their designee's decision to the superintendent or designee, but only if the principal or their designee has imposed a long-term suspension. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English as determined by the home language survey, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language:
    - a. The process for appealing the decision, including that the student or caregiver must file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or caregiver may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.
    - b. If the student is in a preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal or their designee shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the suspension takes effect.

#### **Superintendent's Appeal Hearing:**

- a) A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.

- b) The student or caregiver shall file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or caregiver may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in their discretion, for good cause.
- c) The superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or caregiver requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the superintendent shall grant the extension.
- d) The superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the caregiver in the hearing. The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if they have made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the caregiver and superintendent to participate. The superintendent shall send written notice to the caregiver of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- e) The superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and, if so, what the consequence shall be. The superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or caregiver upon request. The superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and caregiver, upon request.
- f) The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension.
- g) The superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(3)(c)1 through 5. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision.
- h) The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district, with regard to the suspension.

A caregiver conference (re-entry meeting) with the principal or their designee is strongly encouraged before students who are suspended return to school. This conference will be used to promote the engagement of the caregivers in discussions of the student's misconduct and to assist the student in reengaging with the school community.

### **Section III**

#### **LONG-TERM SUSPENSION/EXPULSION FOR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER MGL c. 71 §37H:**

The long-term suspension or expulsion of a student from school will be in accordance with MGL c. 71 §37H. The grounds for long-term suspension or expulsion include but are not limited to the following:

- a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun, a knife, or their facsimile, or anything used in the commission of assault and battery; or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter 94 C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin,

may be subject to long-term suspension or expulsion from the school by the principal or their designee.

- b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide, or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to long-term suspension or expulsion from the school or school district by the principal or their designee.
- c) Due process for a student who is subject to an expulsion or a long-term suspension as a result of possessing drugs/weapons or assaulting school staff includes:
  - 1. A student shall receive written notice before the expulsion or a long-term suspension takes place and written notice of the right to appeal.
  - 2. The student shall be given an opportunity for a hearing and the opportunity to present witnesses and evidence. The student may have an attorney at their own expense.
  - 3. Following the hearing, the principal or their designee may, in their discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel the student.
  - 4. The student may appeal the expulsion (suspension of more than 90 days) to the superintendent provided the appeal is requested in writing, within ten (10) calendar days following the long-term suspension or expulsion.
  - 5. At the appeal hearing, the student may be represented by an attorney and may present oral and written testimony.
  - 6. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of MGL c. 71 §37H.
  - 7. The superintendent's decision is final.
  - 8. Any student who is suspended or expelled for more than ten (10) consecutive days shall have the opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

#### **PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH FELONY COMPLAINT OR CONVICTION UNDER MGL c. 71 §37H ½:**

In accordance with MGL c. 71 §37 H ½, principals have the authority to suspend students charged with a felony and expel or issue a long-term suspension to students convicted or adjudicated of committing a felony if the principal has determined that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Due process for a student who is subject to suspension as a result of a felony charge includes:

- a) The student shall receive written notice before the suspension takes effect and written notice of the right to appeal.
- b) The student shall be given an opportunity to respond to the charges before the suspension takes effect.
- c) The student may appeal the suspension to the superintendent, provided the appeal is requested in writing within five (5) calendar days following the suspension.
- d) The superintendent must hold the appeal hearing within three (3) calendar days of the request.
- e) At the appeal hearing the student may be represented by an attorney. The student has the right to present oral or written testimony on their behalf.
- f) The superintendent must render a decision within five (5) calendar days.

- g) The superintendent's decision is final.
- h) Any student who is suspended or expelled pursuant to this section shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of their removal.
- i) Any student who is suspended or expelled for more than ten (10) consecutive days shall have the opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

Due process for a student who is subject to an expulsion or a long-term suspension as a result of a felony conviction includes:

- a) A student shall receive written notice before the expulsion or a long-term suspension takes place and written notice of the right to appeal.
- b) The student shall be given an opportunity to respond to the charges.
- c) The student may appeal the expulsion or long-term suspension to the superintendent provided the appeal is requested in writing, within five (5) calendar days following the expulsion.
- d) The superintendent must hold the appeal hearing within three (3) calendar days of the request.
- e) At the appeal hearing the student may be represented by an attorney and may present oral and written testimony.
- f) The superintendent must render a decision within five (5) calendar days.
- g) The superintendent's decision is final.
- h) Any student who is suspended or expelled for more than ten (10) consecutive days shall have the opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

#### **Section IV**

#### **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS UNDER MGL c. 71 §§37H, 37H½ AND 37H¾:**

Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of their removal from the class- room or school.

The principal or their designee shall inform the student and caregiver of this opportunity in writing when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

### **Nondiscrimination**

#### **Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/Title IX**

#### **ADA Title I Section 504/Chapter 622 Grievance Procedure**

The Worcester Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer/Educational Institution and does not discriminate regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, age,

handicap (disability), genetics, military service, mental illness, sexual harassment or sexual orientation. The Worcester Public Schools provides equal access to a full range of general, occupational and vocational education programs. The Chief Diversity Officer (Ivonne Perez 508-799-3115) is responsible for coordination of Title IX. The Manager of Social and Emotional Learning (Maura Mahoney, 508-799-3175) is responsible for Section 504 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Grants Manager (Greg Bares, 508-799-3108) is responsible for Title I. Timothy Sippe, Ed.L. (Secondary) and Marie Morse, Ed.D. and Ellen Kelley (Elementary) in the Office for Instruction and School Leadership (508-799-3499) are responsible for Chapter 622. These staff members are responsible for coordinating grievance procedures, which can be viewed at:

<https://worcesterschools.org/wp-content/uploads/handbook/Nondiscrimination%20Grievance%20Procedures.pdf> and by contacting your child's school. For more information relating to Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action contact the Chief Diversity Officer, Ivonne Perez at 508-799-3115, 20 Irving Street, Worcester, MA 01609.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools, as well as state and federal law, that sexual harassment of a student, present or prospective employee, or visitor shall not be tolerated.

#### **Definition**

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

1. submission to such conduct is either made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's study, work or employment, in the Worcester Public Schools
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for educational or employment decisions affecting such individual
3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance or work of an individual with reasonable sensitivity.
4. The victim may be the same or opposite sex as the harasser
5. The victim does not have to be the person to 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 sexual harassment of one female/male may create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for another female/male or may unreasonably interfere with an individual's educational or work performance.
6. Sexual harassment does not depend on the victim's having suffered an educational or economic consequence as a result of the harasser's conduct.

#### **Complaint Procedure**

1. Any member of the school community who believes that they have been subjected to sexual harassment will report the incident(s) to one of the grievance officers. All complaints shall be investigated promptly and resolved as soon as possible.
2. The grievance officer will attempt to resolve the problem in an informal manner through the following process:

- a. The grievance officer will confer with the charging party in order to obtain a clear understanding of that party's statement of the facts, and may interview any witnesses.
- b. The grievance officer will then attempt to meet with the charged party in order to obtain their response to the complaint.
- c. The grievance officer will hold as many meetings with the parties as is necessary to establish the facts.
- d. On the basis of the grievance officer's perception of the situation they may:
  - Attempt to resolve the matter informally through reconciliation.
  - Report the incident and transfer the record to the Superintendent or their designee, and so notify the parties by certified mail.

3. After reviewing the record made by the grievance officer, the Superintendent or designee may attempt to gather any more evidence necessary to decide the case, and thereafter impose any sanctions deemed appropriate, including a recommendation to the committee for termination or expulsion. At this stage of the proceedings, the parties may present witnesses and other evidence, and may also be represented. The parties, to the extent permissible by law, shall be informed of the disposition of the complaint. All matters involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the extent possible. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the Worcester Public Schools will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct.

### **State and Federal Remedies**

Nothing in this policy or procedure shall be deemed to affect a complainant's right to pursue other remedies at law, including administrative appeals or lawsuits.

### **Considerations**

Sexual harassment is not limited to prohibited conduct by a male toward a female, by a supervisory employee toward a non-supervisory employee or by a teacher toward a student, by a student toward a teacher, or by a student toward a student. The Worcester Public Schools' view of sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following considerations:

1. A male, as well as a female, may be the victim of sexual harassment and a female, as well as a male, may be the harasser.
2. The harasser does not have to be the victim's superior.

### **ANTI-HAZING LAW (G.L. c. 269)**

Section 17. Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$3,000.00 or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in Sections 18 and 19, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the

physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Section 18. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in Section 17 and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to their self or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1,000.00.

Section 19. Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post-secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and Sections 17 and 18; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and Sections 17 and 18 to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and Sections 17 and 18 to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgment stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said Sections 17 and 18, that each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants has received a copy of Sections 17 and 18 and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and Sections 17 and 18.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full-time student in such institution a copy of this section and Sections 17 and 18.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and Sections 17 and 18 and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.



## **Child Abuse**

MGL c. 119, §§51A and 51B govern the reporting of child abuse and neglect and require all professional school employees to report suspected cases of abuse of students to the Department of Children and Families.

Worcester Public Schools' policy requires personnel to inform the caregivers when there is an indication of a student's self-destructive behavior. The purpose of this is to alert the caregivers about the student's possible need for additional support and/or treatment.

Related to this requirement, a 51A report will be filed by school authorities when a caregiver ignores the school staff's efforts to involve the caregiver in a perceived need of the child requiring special education, counseling, or emergency medical attention.

## **Drug Free School Zones**

Any person who distributes or possesses with intent to distribute any controlled substance as defined by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 94C within one thousand feet of Worcester Public Schools' property, whether or not school is in session, shall be subject to punishment by imprisonment of not less than two nor more than fifteen years. In addition, a fine of not less than one thousand nor more than ten thousand dollars may be imposed but not in lieu of the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment as established by law.

## **Gun Free School Zones MGL c.269 §10(j)**

MGL c. 269 §10(j) prohibits anyone who is not law enforcement from carrying a gun or dangerous weapon on the grounds of any school (elementary, secondary, college or university). This prohibition is applicable regardless of whether or not an individual possesses a valid license to carry.

## **Education of Homeless Children**

The Worcester Public Schools complies with all requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Subtitle B – Education for Homeless Children and Youth) reauthorized in January, 2002 and the amendments to this act under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. The Worcester Public Schools will:

1. Establish safeguards that protect homeless students from harassment and/or discrimination on the basis of their homelessness
2. Ensure that all children and youth will receive a free appropriate public education and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in our schools
3. Inform caregivers/students of their right to appeal the district's enrollment or transportation decisions to the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or their designee, consistent with the Homeless Education Advisory 2003-7; McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Dispute Resolution process
4. Follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act

When a family is enrolling a student or students in school or changing an address, but is unable to provide the usual form of address verification, or is sharing housing with others or is temporarily sheltered in some other alternative arrangement, the family member will be asked to verify the current living situation on the Student Address Verification Form so as to determine whether the student(s) is/are eligible under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act for required supplementary supportive services and legally mandated exemptions from certain enrollment requirements. In keeping with these requirements:

1. Homeless students have a right to either remain in their school of origin or to attend school where they are temporarily residing, assuming transportation arrangements are feasible and are in the best interest of the student;
2. Students who choose to remain in their school of origin have the right to remain there until the end of the school year in which they get permanent housing;
3. Students who choose to enroll in school where they are temporarily residing must be enrolled immediately, even if they do not bring the records usually required for enrollment with them;
4. If a homeless student arrives without records, the student will be enrolled immediately and the district's designated Homeless Education Liaison must assist the family and contact the previously attended school system to obtain the required records;
5. To the extent feasible, transportation will be provided for students in order to maintain continuity of their attendance in a single school over the course of the school year;
6. When a student is residing outside of the city due to circumstances related to homelessness (in accordance with the statutory definition of "homeless") efforts will be coordinated with the district where the student is temporarily residing to provide transportation to the school of origin if this is the preference of the caregivers and student;
7. Persons living in battered person's shelters or a safe house can give school officials the Post Office Box or mailing address of the shelter office, along with verification from the shelter director that the children are residing in that facility in lieu of the street address. Transportation arrangements will be made in a manner that seeks not to disclose such shelter addresses.
8. Questions or concerns regarding issues pertaining to homeless students should be referred to the Office of Social and Emotional Learning at (508) 799-3175.

#### **POLICY ON CAREGIVER NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the School Committee has adopted the following policy:

At the beginning of each course, all caregivers of students in the Worcester Public Schools will be notified in writing of the courses and curriculum offered that primarily involve human sexual education or human sexuality issues. The principal of each school will be responsible for sending notice(s) to the child's caregivers. The caregivers notice will include the date and time for a caregiver meeting to be held at the school. At the caregiver meeting, the school's health or biology teacher will describe the course in detail and answer questions/concerns which caregivers may have about course content and delivery.

At the time of enrollment, principals will give this written notice to caregivers of those students who enroll in school after the start of the school year.

If the school's curriculum changes during the school year, to the extent practicable, caregivers will be notified of this fact in a timely manner before changes are implemented.

Each written notice sent to caregivers will include a brief description of the curriculum covered by this policy and will inform caregivers that they may:

1. Exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexuality issues, without penalty to the student's grades or academic standing. Caregivers who request to exempt their child can send to their child's principal a letter or the reply form attached to the caregiver notice. The

caregiver should specify the course, class or school activity from which the child is to be exempted. Any student who is exempted by request of the caregiver under this policy will be given an alternative assignment or a directed study period for the duration of the exemption.

2. Inspect and review program instructional materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to caregivers and others to the extent practicable. Caregivers may arrange with the principal to review the materials at the school, and you may review through the Office of Curriculum and Professional Learning, 20 Irving Street, 508-799-3470.

A caregiver, dissatisfied with the process for notice, the access to instructional materials, or the exemption for a student under this policy will follow the Procedures for Resolving School-Related Problems as described in this Policy Handbook.

After following the school district's problem-resolution process, a caregiver who is still dissatisfied can write to the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education at 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148 to request a review of the issue(s) in dispute.

## **ANNUAL NOTICE TO CAREGIVERS ON THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)**

The Worcester Public Schools will inform caregivers of any student surveys that their child may be asked to participate in that include questions on drug use, sexual activity, political/religious affiliations, or other personal information. All such surveys are voluntary and anonymous. A copy of the survey will be made available for review through the principal and on the Worcester Public Schools' website.

## **SELECTIVE SERVICE**

### **Peacetime Registration Requirement of Selective Service System**

Section 3 of the Military Selective Service Act states that male U.S. citizens and aliens residing in the United States, who are between the ages of 18 and 26, are required to register in a manner prescribed by proclamation of the President. The proclamation under which registration is presently required was signed on July 2, 1980. It provides that males born on or after January 1, 1960, must register with Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday.

The Every Student Succeeds Act reiterates that the various branches of the United States armed forces may have access to directory information of 11th and 12th grade high school students. However, the Family Rights to Privacy Act states that caregivers may deny this access if they so wish. Directory information includes student's name, address, phone number, and age. If the caregiver wishes for the Worcester Public Schools not to divulge their child's information, the caregiver must make that request in writing to the school principal.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

### **The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive federal funds.

FERPA gives caregivers certain rights with respect to their child's education records. These rights transfer to the student when they reach the age of 18. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Under FERPA, caregivers and eligible students have the following rights:

1. To inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless it is impossible for caregivers or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee if copies are requested.
2. To request that a school add information, comments, data or any other relevant written material to the student record. If the school decides not to amend the record, the caregiver or eligible student then has the right to a conference with the principal. After the conference, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the caregiver or eligible student has the right to appeal to the Superintendent and has a further right to appeal to the School Committee.
3. To have control over the disclosure of personal identifiable information from the education record. Generally, schools must have written permission from the caregiver or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - a. School officials with legitimate educational interest
  - b. Other schools to which a student is transferring
  - c. Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
  - d. Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
  - e. Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
  - f. Accrediting organizations
  - g. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
  - h. Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies and
  - i. State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law

FERPA allows schools to disclose, without consent, "directory" information, which is considered by the Worcester Public Schools to include student's name; honors and awards received; participation in officially recognized activities and sports;

Caregivers and eligible students may request that the Worcester Public Schools not disclose directory information by contacting the Office of School and Student Performance by U.S. mail at the Durkin Administration Building, Room 202, 20 Irving Street, Worcester, MA, 01609. Additional information on FERPA may also be obtained from the U.S. Department of Education at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-8520

## **Regulations**

In compliance with Chapter 71, Section 34D of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Worcester School Department is notifying the caregivers of public school students of its plans to gather information regarding students and their backgrounds, aptitudes and achievement in order to better meet their individual needs.

On the secondary level, students maybe be asked to complete a questionnaire which relates to identifying information, family background, interests and plans for the future. Any questions which students and/or caregivers feel should not be answered may be omitted. This information is necessary in order to keep school records up to date.

Any variance from the preceding plans will be made known in writing prior to implementation.

### **Types of Student Records**

The school principal or their designee is responsible for the privacy and security of all student records maintained in the school. The Superintendent of Schools or their designee is responsible for all student records that are not under the supervision of the school principal.

The student's record consists of the transcript and the temporary record, according to 603 Code of Massachusetts Regulations, Chapter 23.00. It includes all information, regardless of form or characteristics, concerning a student that is organized on the basis of the student's name or in a way such student may be individually identified.

1. **Transcript** - Minimum administrative records necessary to reflect the student's educational progress and to operate the educational system. Data is limited to:
  - a. Name (student and caregiver)
  - b. Address (student and caregiver)
  - c. Telephone number (student and caregiver)
  - d. Date of birth
  - e. Course titles
  - f. Grades or equivalent
  - g. Course credit
  - h. Grade level completed
  - i. Year completed

The transcript may be destroyed sixty (60) years following the student's graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the school system.

2. **Temporary Record** - All information in the student record not contained in the transcript which is clearly of importance to the educational process. This information may include:
  - a. Standardized test results (including MCAS results)\*
  - b. Class rank
  - c. Extracurricular activities
  - d. Evaluations
  - e. Educational plans
  - f. IEP, 504, Regular Education Accommodation, Behavior Support Plans and Safety Support Plans
  - g. Student Support Process Reports
  - h. Individual Student Success Plans
  - i. Health records
  - j. Attendance
  - k. Incident reports involving student suspension or the committing of criminal acts
  - l. School Discipline Records

\*In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 87, the score of any group intelligence test shall be removed from the record of the student at the end of the school year in which the test was administered.

Section 37L of the Education Reform Act of 1993 requires that any incident report involving student suspension for the committing of criminal acts must be included in the student's record. This includes reports in which the "student" was charged with an infraction that resulted in suspension. If a student transfers to a new school system, this information must be included as part of the student record, as the new system must be provided with this information.

Teachers' notes and similar information that is not accessible to authorized school personnel or third parties are not included in the student record. Such information may be shared with the student, caregiver, or a temporary substitute without making the file part of the student record. However, if such information is released to authorized school personnel, it then becomes a part of the student's record. Any information added to the temporary record shall include the name, signature and position of the person entering the information, date of entry, and shall be limited to that which is relevant to the educational needs of the student.

The temporary record of each student enrolled on or after June 2002 shall be destroyed no later than seven (7) years after the student transfers, graduates, or withdraws from the school district. Written notice to the eligible student and their caregiver of the approximate date of destruction of the temporary record and their right to receive the information in whole or in part, shall be made at the time of such transfer, graduation or withdrawal.

During the time a student is enrolled in a school, the principal or their designee shall periodically review and destroy misleading, outdated or irrelevant information contained in the temporary record. The Worcester Public Schools hereby gives notice on an annual basis that temporary records are so reviewed and destroyed at the end of each school year as deemed appropriate. Caregivers wanting an opportunity to receive the information or a copy prior to its destruction should contact the principal by June 1st of the school year.

### **3. Access to Student Records**

The following personnel have access to students' records in the performance of their official duties:

- a. School administrators, teachers, counselors and other professionals who are employed by the Worcester Public Schools or who are providing services to the student under an agreement between the Worcester Public Schools and a service provider who work directly with the students.
- b. Administrative office staff and clerical personnel, including operators of data processing equipment or equipment that produces microfilm/ microfiche who process information for the student's records. Such personnel shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.
- c. The Evaluation Team which evaluates children pursuant to Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws.
- d. School health personnel and local and state health department personnel in the performance of official duties.
- e. The following persons serving in a caregivers role shall have access to a student's records:
  - i. The custodial caregiver with physical custody
  - ii. The student's caregiver
  - iii. A person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of or in conjunction with the student's caregiver, assuming this caregiver has physical custody.

- f. Non-custodial caregivers **shall not** have access to a student's records when:
  - i. The caregiver has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the child or to the custodial caregiver or
  - ii. The caregiver has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation or
  - iii. The caregiver's access to the child or to the custodial caregiver has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the student information described in the statute.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71 § 34H requires the non-custodial caregiver to submit a written request for access to the student's records to the school principal. For further information contact your child's principal.

- g. The student, if age fourteen (14) or upon entering grade nine (9).
- h. Authorized school administrative personnel may examine records for administrative reasons even if they are not providing direct service to the student.
- i. Federal, state and local education officials, and their authorized agents, as necessary, in connection with the enforcement of federal and state education laws. Personally identifiable data shall be protected and destroyed when no longer needed for enforcement purposes.
- j. To authorized school personnel of the school to which a student transfers or seeks to enroll [603 CMR 23.07 (4)(f)].
- k. Upon the receipt of a court order or lawfully issued subpoena, provided that the eligible student or caregiver is notified in reasonable time that they may seek to have the process quashed, as required by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 66A, § 2(k).
- l. The Department of Children and Families (DCF).
- m. A probation officer.
- n. A justice of any court.
- o. The Department of Youth Services (DYS).
- p. Bureau of Special Investigation on Welfare Fraud may inspect enrollment and attendance records of any student who is being investigated for welfare fraud or of any student who is the child, ward or dependent of someone who is being investigated for welfare fraud. The law prohibits the Bureau from obtaining access to academic, medical and evaluative records.
- q. Appropriate parties, including the local police department and the Department of Children and Families (DCF), in connection with a health or safety emergency, including weapon reports, if knowledge of the information may be necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

Schools are required by state law to "flag" or mark the student record of a child who has been reported missing, and should notify the police whenever there is an inquiry regarding the records.

In line with federal regulations a school may release a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletics teams, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans without the consent of the eligible student or caregiver. This serves as Worcester Public Schools public notice of the types of information it may release.

**Eligible students and caregivers who do not want this information disclosed to any third party must submit a written request to the principal of the school.**

4. **Access of other third parties** requires the written consent of the eligible student or caregiver except for the provisions specified under 23.07(4) of the regulations. When granting consent, the eligible student or caregiver shall have the right to designate which parts of the student's record shall be released to the third party. A copy of such consent shall be retained by the eligible student or caregiver and a duplicate placed in the temporary record. Except for information described in 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a), personally identifiable information from a student record shall be released to a third party on the condition that (s)he will not permit any other third party to have access to such information without the written consent of the eligible student or caregiver.

#### **5. Amending Student Records**

The student and/or their/caregiver shall have the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant written material to the student record. In accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/sims/sasid/>, district and school records are to reflect a student's stated name and pronouns. Nothing more formal than usage is required, consistent with the statutory standard.

The above persons have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in the student record. They shall also have the right to a conference with the principal to make objections known regarding material contained in the record.

In the event any decision of a principal is not satisfactory, the student and/or their caregiver may then appeal to the Superintendent in writing for a review of the objections. A further appeal is possible to the School Committee if the Superintendent's response is not satisfactory. A hearing shall be conducted by the School Committee within four weeks of written notice of an appeal. The student and/or caregiver may be represented by an advocate of their choosing to cross-examine witnesses and to present evidence. Written notice of the decision will be furnished to the student and/or caregiver.

### **EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT**

The Worcester Public Schools makes every effort to comply with the regulations and requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a federal law enacted in 2015. This legislation requires school district personnel to notify caregivers of a variety of issues regarding their children's education. Among them is a requirement to notify caregivers of students attending Title I schools of their right to know about the qualifications of the teachers and instructional assistants who work with their children.

In a Title I school, caregivers have the right to know the professional qualifications of classroom teachers who instruct their children. ESSA allows caregivers to ask for certain information about a student's classroom teacher and requires that the district provide the caregivers with the requested information in a timely manner. Specifically, caregivers have the right to ask for the following information about each of their children's classroom teachers in a Title I school:

1. Whether the teacher has met the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.



2. Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which DESE qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
3. Whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
4. Whether any instructional assistants or other paraprofessionals provide services to your child, and, if they do, their qualifications.

If caregivers would like to receive any of this information, they must contact the principal of their child(ren)'s Title I school.

In addition, districts are required to provide to each individual caregiver information on the child's level of achievement and academic growth of the student, if applicable and available, on each of the state academic assessments required under Title I.

At the beginning of each school year, Title I schools must notify caregivers of each child that the caregivers may request (and the school will provide) in a timely manner information regarding any state or school policy regarding student participation in any assessments mandated by ESSA. Information on each mandated assessment is available on the Worcester Public Schools' website.

No later than thirty days after the beginning of the school year, each Title I school must inform caregivers of an English learner identified for participation or participating in a language instruction educational program of the reasons for placement; the child's level of English proficiency and academic achievement; and how the program will address the child's specific needs; and to provide caregivers with written guidance detailing the caregiver's rights and options with regard to such a program.

### **Bullying and Harassment**

The Worcester Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber-bullying. The school will investigate and respond to claims of bullying or harassment in accordance with the district's Bullying Intervention Plan and other school policies and state and federal law.

Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members of a written, verbal or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target which:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to them self, or of damage to their property;
- Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

"Cyber-bullying" means 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 the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in 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 the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of caregivers and families are expected.

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

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds;
- At school bus stops
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited 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 if the act or acts in question:

- Create a hostile environment at school for the target
- Infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- Materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school

Acts of bullying can result in any one, or combination of, the following legal charges:

- Assault (GL c. 265, §13A). The act or an instance of unlawfully threatening or attempting to injure another.
- Assault & Battery (GL c. 265, §13A). An assault upon a victim that is carried out by striking the victim, knocking the victim down, or otherwise doing violence to the victim.
- Criminal Harassment (GL c. 265, §43A). Whoever willfully and maliciously engages in a knowing pattern of conduct or series of acts over a period of time directed at a specific person, which seriously alarms that person and would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress.
- Harassing/Annoying Phone Calls. (GL c. 269, §43A). Whoever telephones another person, or causes any person to be telephoned, repeatedly, for the sole purpose of harassing, annoying or molesting such person or their family, whether or not conversation ensues, or whoever telephones a person repeatedly, and uses indecent or obscene language to such a person.

- Threats (GL c. 275, §4) (GL c. 209A, §7). An expression of intention and an ability in circumstances that would justify apprehension on the part of the recipient.
- Disruption of School Assembly (GL c. 272, §40). Whoever willfully interrupts or disturbs a school or other assembly of people met for a lawful purpose.
- Civil Rights Violation (GL c. 265, §§37, 38). No person, whether or not acting under color of law, shall by force or threat of force, willfully injure, intimidate or interfere with, or attempt to injure, intimidate or interfere with, or oppress or threaten any other person in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to them by the constitution or laws of the Commonwealth or by the constitution or laws of the United States.
- Malicious Destruction of Property (GL c. 266, §127). Whoever destroys or injures the personal property, dwelling house or building of another.

## **Athletes and Participants in School-Related Activities**

### **General**

Athletes and participants in school-related activities shall be governed by local and state law, MIAA regulations, the Policies Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools, and rules included in the Worcester Public Schools Code of Conduct for Athletes and Participants in School-Related Activities.

### **Academic Requirements**

1. A student must secure during the last marking period preceding the contest (e.g., second quarter marks determine third quarter eligibility) a grade of 65 or above in four traditional yearlong major courses. Yearlong major courses are equivalent to a Carnegie Unit which is a minimum of 1.0 credits. In addition, a student's overall average of all yearlong courses must be a C or above.
2. A student cannot at any time represent a school unless that student is taking courses that would be the equivalent of four traditional yearlong major courses.
3. To be eligible for the fall marking period, students are required to have passed four yearlong classes with a 65 or above. In addition, a student's overall average of all yearlong courses must be a C or above. Students in grades 10, 11 or 12 are eligible for a one-time-only waiver during their high school years. The waiver is applicable if the student does not meet the C average (minimum of 70) on all yearlong courses in the previous academic year. Incoming 9th graders are exempt from academic requirement for the first quarter only.
4. Academic eligibility of all students shall be considered as official and determining only on the published date when the report cards for that ranking period are to be issued to the caregivers of all students.
5. Incomplete grades may not count towards eligibility.
6. A student who repeats work upon which they once received credit cannot count that subject a second time for eligibility.
7. A student cannot count for eligibility any subject taken during the summer, unless that subject has been previously pursued and failed.

## Attendance

1. A student who is absent from school will not participate in any school-related activity. This includes in-house suspensions.
2. A student must be in school for at least three (3) hours to be able to participate in any school-related activity.
3. Any student with five (5) or more unexcused absences will be excluded from the club or team for the remainder of the current sports season. A student with ten (10) or more unexcused absences will be ineligible for any club or team for the remainder of the academic year.

## Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Activities

Consistent with the requirements of Chapter 166 of the Acts of 2010, An Act Relative to Safety Regulations for School Athletic Programs:

1. At or before the start of each sport or band season, all students who plan to participate in extracurricular athletic activities shall complete and submit to the coach, athletic director, or band director a current WPS Permission Form, signed by both the student and the caregiver, that provides comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history; any head, face or cervical spine injury history; and any history of co-existent concussive injuries.
2. Any student, who during a practice or competition, sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, shall be removed from the practice or competition immediately and may not return to the practice or competition that day.
3. The student shall not return to play unless and until the student provides medical clearance and authorization as specified in 105 CMR 201.011.

All head injuries must be reported to the nursing administrative office, including those that occur outside of the school prior to the start of the sports season or physical activity. caregivers must also complete the history of head injury section on the **Extracurricular Athletic Activities Permission Form**.

Additional information, including the *Post Sports-related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form*, can be found on the Worcester Public Schools website: <https://worcesterschools.org/wp-content/uploads/handbook/HEAD%20INJURY%20MEDICAL%20CLEARANCE%20FORM.pdf>

## Chemical Health MIAA Rule 62

**From the earliest fall practice date, to the conclusion of the academic year or final athletic event (whichever is later),** a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product (including e-cigarettes, Vape pens and all similar devices); marijuana (including synthetic); steroids; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as “NA or near beer”, inhalants (defined as any substance that produces a mind-altering effect when inhaled), and misuse of over-the-counter medications and substances used for the purposes of altering one’s mental state. It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student’s own use by their doctor.

If a student who violates this rule is unable to participate in interscholastic sports due to injury or academics, any penalty imposed will not take effect until that student is able to participate again. See MIAA Handbook for penalties.

### **Reasonable Conduct**

The Worcester Public Schools recognizes that the safety and welfare of individual students and teams are a priority. Therefore, students will not engage in any acts of criminal activity such as, but not limited to, vandalism, assault and battery, sexual misconduct, hazing, plagiarism, theft or other disruptive conduct.

Students are also expected to behave appropriately during all school-related activities. Detrimental actions include, but are not limited to, insubordination, fighting, taunting, unsportsmanlike conduct, lying, and inappropriate language or gestures and all other infractions as stated in the Worcester Public Schools' Policies Handbook and school handbooks.

Recognizing the varying degrees of severity, the type of misconduct and a student's previous record of conduct, each situation will be considered individually. The principal working with the coach/advisor will determine appropriate consequences, which may include denial of participation or dismissal from the team/activity. In all cases the student will have the right to due process (**Due Process, page 22**).

It is also understood that spectators, including caregivers of all Worcester Public Schools' athletes/students, are to conduct themselves appropriately at all athletic competitions/activities, both home and away. Caregivers are not expected to taunt or display any inappropriate behavior to other fans, officials, coaches or players. Inappropriate behavior may lead to expulsion from the event.

### **Felony Charge/Conviction**

1. Any student charged with a felony will be ineligible to participate in any school-related activities until the case has been adjudicated and the charges dismissed or reduced to a non-felony status
2. Any student convicted of a felony and/or expelled or issued a long-term suspension from school will be ineligible to participate in any school-related activities for the duration of the expulsion or long-term suspension.

### **Team Management Plan**

At the preseason meeting with the Director of Athletics, each coach will turn in a management plan outlining rules and expectations for the coming season that has been approved by the principal. This plan will be distributed to all candidates for the team.

### **Discipline of Students Under Section 504 and ADA**

Under various federal and state laws and regulations, students with disabilities may not be discriminated against in discipline matters on the basis of their disability or impairment. In addition to those rights set forth in the Worcester Public Schools Student Handbook, procedures will be implemented to comply with state and federal law and regulations regarding students with disabilities. Additional information can be found at: <https://worcesterschools.org/wp-content/uploads/handbook/Discipline%20of%20Students%20Under%20Section%20504%20and%20ADA.pdf>, or you may obtain a copy from your child's school or by contacting the WPS 504 coordinator at 508-799-3175.

## **Students with Disabilities and/or Suspected Disabilities Receiving Special Education Services or 504 Plan**

For special education students, the principal or their designee will notify the Evaluation Team Chair of the suspendable offense of a student with a disability and a record will be kept in the Student Information System. For 504 students, the principal or their designee will notify the 504 Coordinator of the suspendable offense of the student and a record will be kept in the Student Information System.

### **Procedures for Suspension(s) Not Exceeding 10 School Days**

- Any student with a disability may be suspended for up to ten (10) school days during a school year. Disciplinary decisions are the same as for students without disabilities and in accordance with the due process procedures in this handbook.
- The school provides additional safeguards for students with disabilities prior to any suspension beyond 10 consecutive days or more than 10 cumulative days (if there is a pattern of suspension) in any school year.

### **Procedures for Suspension(s) Exceeding 10 School Days**

- If your child is suspended for more than 10 school days in a school year, or if there is a pattern of suspension, this removal is considered a “change of placement”. A change of placement because of a disciplinary removal occurs if your child with a disability is removed from their current educational placement for more than 10 consecutive school days, or the child is subjected to a series of removals that constitutes a pattern because: (1) the removals total more than 10 school days in a school year; (2) your child’s behavior is substantially similar to previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals; and (3) additional factors such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another constitute a pattern.
- A change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under federal special education law and Section 504.
- Prior to any removal that constitutes a change of placement, the school may convene a team meeting to develop a plan for conducting a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) that will be used as the basis for developing specific strategies to address your child’s problematic behavior.
- Prior to any removal that constitutes a change of placement, the school must inform you that the law requires the school district consider whether or not the behavior that forms the basis of the disciplinary action is related to your child’s disability. This consideration is called a “manifestation determination”. caregivers have a right to participate in this process. All relevant information will be considered including the IEP or Section 504 Plan, teacher observations, evaluation reports and information provided by caregivers.
- At a manifestation determination meeting, the team will consider:
  - ◇ Did the student’s disability cause or have a direct and substantial relationship to the conduct in question?
  - ◇ Was the conduct a direct result of the district’s failure to implement the IEP?

- If the team's manifestation determination decision is that the disciplinary action was related to your child's disability, then your child may not be removed from the current educational placement (unless under the special circumstances or caregiver agrees. The team will review the IEP or Section 504 Plan and any behavioral intervention plans and may amend those plans as appropriate. The team will complete a functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plan if it has not already done so.
- If the manifestation determination decision is that the disciplinary action was not related to your child's disability, then the school may suspend or otherwise discipline your child according to the school's code of conduct. The team may, as appropriate, complete a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modification, to address the behavior so that it does not recur. For students with IEPs, during the period of time of removal from school that exceeds 10 school days, the school district must provide educational services that allow your child to continue to make educational progress. For students with Section 504 Plans, there is no automatic right to receive educational services beyond the 10th school day of suspension under federal law, however, state law does provide all students with the rights to receive educational services during periods of suspension lasting longer than ten days.

### **Special Circumstances for Exclusion**

Special circumstances exist if your child: possesses, uses, sells or solicits illegal drugs on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event; carries a weapon to school or a school-sponsored event; or inflicts serious bodily harm upon another person at school or a school-sponsored event. Under these circumstances, the principal may place your child in an interim alternate educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days.

Your child may remain in this IAES for a period of time not to exceed 45 school days. Thereafter, your child will return to the previously agreed-upon placement unless a hearings officer has ordered another placement, or you and the school agree to another placement. For students with Section 504 Plans, there is no automatic right to receive educational services beyond the 10th day of school suspension under federal law, however, state law does provide all students with the rights to receive educational services during periods of suspensions lasting longer than ten days. School personnel will provide caregiver's Notice of Procedural Safeguards (Special Education) or Notice of Caregiver and Student Rights Under Section 504 for students with disabilities prior to any suspension exceeding 10 school days in one school year or a removal which results in a change in placement. These notices will provide an explanation of the process should there be disagreement regarding the manifestation determination or any placement decision. The caregiver and/or student may petition the Bureau of Special Education Appeals for a hearing and may have other rights as outlined in the Notice of Procedural Safeguards.

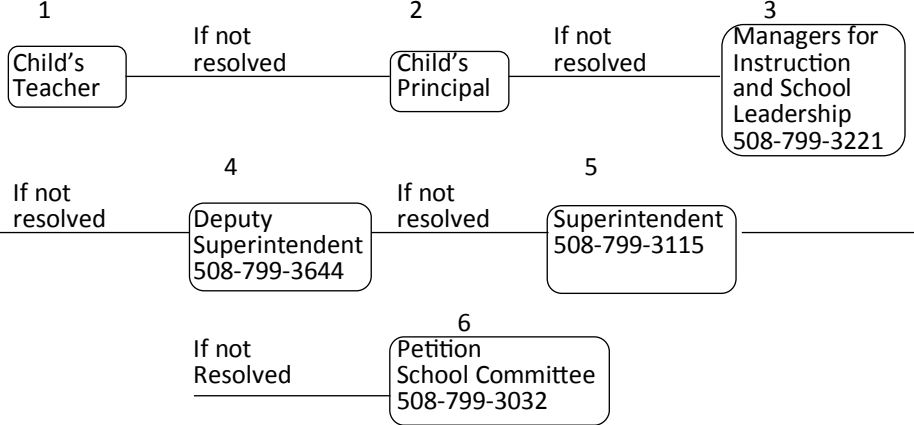
## **RESOLVING SCHOOL-RELATED PROBLEMS**

### **Procedure**

#### **RESOLVING SCHOOL-RELATED PROBLEMS**

In order to resolve school-related problems, caregivers will follow this process:

**If a problem arises, contact:**



**Policy Regarding the Reporting of any Potential or Actual Incidents that may Impact on the Safety of Children.**

Principals have been directed to provide caregivers with verbal and written reports of any potential or actual incidents that may impact on the safety of students.

Criteria for reporting will include the following:

- 1. Caregivers should be notified immediately by telephone of any incident which might impact safety.
- 2. Each verbal report will be followed up immediately by a written report which is either mailed or delivered to the caregivers.
- 3. Principals will file a dual report immediately with the appropriate Managers for Instruction and School Leadership and the School Committee.

**HEALTH SERVICES FOR STUDENTS**

**Wellness Policy  
Preamble**

It is the mission of the Worcester Public Schools (WPS) Wellness Policy to enable students to become independent and self-directed learners, responsible for meeting their own health and nutritional needs as developmentally appropriate. It is the goal of the Wellness Policy to promote **all students'** physical, emotional and social well-being through the coordinated efforts of all departments and services offered in the Worcester Public Schools. This model calls for a collaborative, coordinated and comprehensive approach to learning and health, and serves as the model for the WPS Wellness Policy and nursing practice.

**Overview of School Health/Nursing Services Offered**

A coordinated program of accessible health services will be provided to students through the leadership of the Nursing Department, in collaboration with the school Physician Consultant, various school departments, and community agencies, as applicable. The program includes communicable disease prevention and reporting, immunization compliance, health education and wellness promotion, health assessments and screenings, chronic condition (including but not



limited to asthma, diabetes, life-threatening allergies, seizures, ADHD) management, counseling, community health referrals, first aid and emergency care. The school nurses collaborate and coordinate with caregivers and other health care providers to create an Individual Health Care Plan.

School nurses provide **mandated screenings** for students at various grade levels in accordance with MA State laws and the Division of Public Health requirements. Screenings include vision and hearing (grades K-5, 8, 10), scoliosis (grades 5-9) height, weight and BMI (grades 1, 4, 7, 10) and Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment [SBIRT] (grades 7 and 9). All students will receive a form from school for caregivers to choose to opt out of one or more of these preventive screenings. All school staff throughout the district are trained by school nurses yearly on life threatening allergy awareness education and Epi-Pen administration and basic first-aid. There are also many school staff members who are trained by the Nursing Department in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) use. Every school and outside athletic area has at minimum one AED available and at least one person trained to use it at all times.

The Nursing Administration coordinates and supports other health services available to students including oral health screenings and preventive care such as fluoride and sealant application with referral to a dentist as needed. All high schools, Burncoat, Worcester East, and Sullivan middle schools, and Elm Park Community, Goddard School of Science and Technology, and Woodland Academy elementary schools have School-Based Health Centers (SBHC) staffed with Nurse Practitioners who can provide more advanced health assessments, diagnoses, and treatment as indicated. Students can also receive physical examinations and immunizations if registered. The Edward Kennedy Health Center (EKHC) and the Family Health Center (FHC) of Worcester operate the SBHCs in the WPSs. Caregivers who are interested in this additional health service must register their child/children at the start of every school year, providing consent for treatment.

### **School Health Advisory Council**

The School Committee recognizes the relationship between student wellness and student achievement. The purpose of the School Health Advisory Council is to recommend, review and help implement school district policies addressing school nutrition, nutrition education, physical activity and related issues that affect student health (105 CMR 215.000). The council is comprised of the Coordinator of Nursing and a variety of community agencies who work together to advocate, develop, implement, monitor, review and revise school health policy as needed/mandated.

See the WPS Nursing and Health website (<https://www.worcesterschools.org/about/departments-offices/nursing/>) for the complete Wellness Policy and other health-related policies and forms or call your school nurse with any questions.

### **Suggested Guidelines for Safe Backpack Use**

**Recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics for choosing the correct backpack include:**

1. Do not carry weight greater than 20% of body weight
2. Select a style that has padded shoulders and a waist strap
3. Use both shoulder straps
4. Tighten the straps so the pack is close to the body
5. Distribute the weight of objects evenly in the backpack
6. Utilize all compartments

1. Pack heaviest objects close to the back with the center of gravity near the pelvis

### **Access for Pregnant Students**

Pregnant students are encouraged to continue to attend school. Every effort will be made to see that the educational program of the student is disrupted as little as possible, that return to school after delivery is encouraged, and that every reasonable opportunity to complete high school is provided.

In accordance with Federal Law and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations and guidance, a student who is pregnant is permitted to remain in regular classes and participate in extracurricular activities with non-pregnant students throughout her pregnancy. After giving birth, a student is permitted to return to the academic program in which they were enrolled and is permitted to participate in extracurricular programs.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Transportation Program**

Free transportation is granted to students in grades kindergarten through 12 who reside two (2) miles or more from the school which they are entitled to attend.

**The legal obligation of the School Committee in this respect is limited to provision for transportation for elementary school children and the School Committee does have the right, if necessary, to charge for transportation or not provide transportation at the secondary level regardless of where students may live.**

All eligible K-12 students are expected to ride only the bus to which they are assigned both to and from school and be picked up and dropped off at their assigned bus stops. Students will be asked to walk to a common bus stop. In that situation, students in grades K-6 should be accompanied to the stop by a caregiver. The safety responsibility for escorting a child to and from the bus stop shall rest with the caregivers of the student involved.

Caregivers of students are responsible for supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school day. Once the child boards the bus – and only at that time – do they become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day. It is the responsibility of the caregiver to escort the child to and from the bus stop where there are no sidewalks, where sidewalks are only on one side, where the bus stop is on the opposite side of the street, or where the caregiver has other traffic concerns.

It is also expected that all students will be outside at the bus stop TEN minutes before the bus arrives. Bus drivers have been instructed NOT TO STOP if no child is waiting. Students should be visible and not in cars, stores, or otherwise not easily seen by the school bus driver. For safety reasons, it is most important that a caregiver be at the bus stop to receive the homecoming child.

Students in kindergarten who are transported will receive an identification tag at their school to ensure that they are not discharged from the school bus without a caregiver being present. Students not released from the school bus because no caregiver is present will be taken to the Clark Street Community School, 280 Clark St., (508) 799-8212, to be picked up by a caregiver.

Students who are assigned a school bus pass through their secondary school are expected to carry the pass with them at all times when riding the school bus and to display it to the driver for inspection, if requested. Only students with valid passes will be permitted to ride the school bus.

Transportation eligibility is based solely on the student's home address and is only for the transportation between the student's home bus stop and the school they attend.

Additionally, transportation shall be provided at district expense for children whose Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requires such transportation.

Free transportation will be provided when the presence of long-term heavy construction projects on the prescribed routes creates a hazard. This applies only for the duration of the project.

### **Busing Privileges**

In view of the fact that a school bus is an extension of the classroom, the Worcester Public Schools shall require each student to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Code of Conduct and Safety and Behavior Rules for Pupils Riding School Buses as stated in the student handbook. School bus drivers have the authority and the responsibility to maintain good order while operating the bus. Additionally, bus drivers are instructed to inform the building principal about any student misconduct that creates an annoyance or distraction while driving. The building principal will inform the caregivers of the misconduct and request their cooperation in monitoring the child's behavior. Any student who becomes a disciplinary problem on the school bus may have riding privileges suspended on a temporary or permanent basis. In such cases, the caregivers of the child involved become responsible for seeing that the child gets to and from school safely.

Worcester Public Schools' school buses may be equipped with cameras to create a video and audio record of each trip. This video and/or audio may be used to assist the school principal in determining what discipline, if any, is appropriate in cases of reported violations of safe riding practices. It may also be used as a tool to teach and reinforce safe riding practices for all students.

As always, safety is of primary importance. At the bus stops and on the school bus, students are expected to be well behaved and cooperative at all times.

### **Transfer Students**

Transportation will be provided to transfer students only if their transfers have a positive effect on the state approved desegregation plan.

### **Homeless Students**

Refer to transportation services described on page 34 under Education of Homeless Children.

### **Two Mile Limit**

The two-mile measurement is the shortest vehicular route between the nearest walkway or driveway to the student's residence and the nearest walkway or gateway leading to the front door of the school. Mileage will NOT be calculated to or from a daycare provider.

### **School Bus Stops and Routing**

Students will walk to a common bus stop. Bus stops will be set up, approved, and verified by the Worcester Public Schools Transportation Department only. Students are not entitled to street-to-street or door-to-door pickup or delivery. All stops will be at corners, whenever possible, to make them fair and consistent for all. All requests for additions or changes of school bus stops must be made through the student's school principal or designee. Caregivers are responsible to ensure that their child is at the correct bus stop. Any child standing at unauthorized

locations, or bus stops not assigned by the Transportation Department, will not be picked up. Do not assume bus stops are in the same location as the previous year, as they may change due to student location and population. School bus drivers are not permitted to make changes, additions, or deletions of any bus stops. While the law requires school departments to furnish transportation to those students falling within the state's guidelines, it does not relieve the caregiver of the responsibility of supervision of the child until the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the day. Once a child boards the bus, only at that time do they become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the bus stop at the close of the school day.

### **Riding School Buses**

The following safety and behavior rules for pupils riding school buses are published as a guideline for students entitled to transportation by the Worcester Public Schools. A breach of these rules may result in loss of busing privileges.

1. Only pupils and school personnel assigned to the bus shall be allowed to ride in a school bus unless permission is granted by the Director of Transportation.
2. Students should be at the pick-up point at the time designated and prepared to get on the bus with the least possible delay in order to keep the bus on schedule.
3. While at a bus pick-up point, students must:
  - Conduct themselves in an orderly manner;
  - Stay out of the street;
  - Respect nearby private property rights;
  - Remain at least ten (10) feet from the bus when it stops to pick up, and move toward the bus only when the door opens.
4. Students should ride only the bus to which they are regularly assigned.
5. Students should take seats promptly after boarding the bus and remain in their seats while the bus is in motion.
6. Students shall not open or close windows or emergency doors except when asked to do so by the driver or the bus monitor. Students must keep arms and heads inside the bus.
7. While a passenger on a bus, a student must not:
  - Smoke or vape;
  - Throw any objects on the bus or out the windows;
  - Disturb the driver or other students;
  - Litter;
  - Make loud or unnecessary noises;
  - Eat food or drink;
  - Transport items which may endanger the health or safety of any other passengers and,
  - Damage or deface any part of the bus.
8. Students must remain quiet when approaching a railroad crossing.
9. Students who exit from the bus should pass ten (10) feet in front of the bus and look in both directions before crossing.
10. In the event of a road emergency, students are to remain on the bus unless requested to leave by the driver of the bus.
11. After exiting the bus, students should enter the school directly for safety purposes.
12. A student who has been issued an identification card by school authorities should carry such card with them at all times and show it when requested.

13. Bus drivers/monitors must report violations of the above rules and regulations to the school official on Bus Conduct Forms. Riding the bus is a privilege that can be denied temporarily or permanently when the student's behavior warrants it.

## STUDENT SERVICES

### Social Emotional Learning

The Office of Social Emotional Learning (OSEL) consists of School Psychologists and School Adjustment Counselors who assist students, referred as a result of academic, social or behavioral difficulties. **A referral to the Social Emotional Learning Department does not constitute a referral for a Special Education Team Evaluation.**

Social Emotional Learning Department services include:

- Collaborative consultation with teachers
- Individual and group counseling
- Individual assessments
- Collaboration with community agencies
- Referral and case management services
- Caregiver Consultation and Support and referral to appropriate community-based resources
- Supervision of attendance
- Mediation
- Participation in SSP and 504 committees as requested by building principal
- Safety Assessments
- Crisis intervention and stabilization services
- Specialized case management, service coordination and support for students in the care of DCF and for homeless students
- Coordination, training and support of the district's Universal and Tiered SEL supports and interventions
- Delivery of school-wide social emotional learning supports

### Section 504 - Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools to comply with Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAA, 2008) in all aspects of its programming, including both academic and extra-curricular activities and programs.

The Rehabilitation Acts of 1973, also known as "Section 504," is a non-discrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of the Act is to prohibit discrimination by institutions that receive federal funding and to assure that qualified disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students. Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

An eligible student under Section 504 is a student who:

1. has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities
2. has a record of such an impairment
3. is regarded as having such an impairment

Major life activities include but are not limited to caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating and working.

Under the ADA Amendments Act, whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity is to be determined without reference to the ameliorative effects of mitigating measures. This means that the school cannot consider the ameliorative effect of mitigating measures — with the exception of eyeglasses and contact lenses — in determining whether someone has a qualifying disability.

### **Eligibility**

If you believe that your child may qualify for a 504 accommodation plan in order to access programs or activities in the Worcester Public Schools, please notify the Principal at your child's school. If you have medical or other documentation about the disabling condition, it is helpful to bring this to the Principal, although a medical diagnosis is not required. The Principal or their designated 504 coordinator for the school will review the concerns and gather data from teachers, school nurses, caregivers or others working with your child. This information will assist the 504 committee to determine how and whether your child's impairment substantially limits a major life activity. Specialists at the school may be consulted. If an assessment by a specialist is needed, you will be asked for written consent to complete these at school at no charge to you. When relevant data and information has been collected, the 504 committee will meet with you to determine the student's eligibility under Section 504 and to develop a plan of appropriate accommodations for your child. If it is determined that your child is not eligible, you will be provided this decision in writing and receive information concerning your procedural rights.

### **Who Might be Eligible Under Section 504?**

Students may be eligible for accommodations or related services for a variety of reasons. Following are examples of students who may be eligible under Section 504 depending on the degree to which the disability interferes significantly with a major life activity:

- a student who has a hearing impairment
- a student who has exercise-induced asthma
- a student diagnosed with ADD/ADHD
- a student with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis
- a student with Crohn's disease

### **School Districts Must**

Conduct an evaluation of any student who, because of a disability, needs or is believed to need special education or related services in order to access all learning activities in a manner comparable to that of non-disabled same age peers. The evaluation will consist of the collection and analysis of data relevant to the impact of the disability on the student's functional access to curriculum, learning, social and enrichment opportunities that comprise the educational program.

Additionally, the Worcester Public Schools must "undertake to identify and locate every qualified handicapped person between the ages of 3 and 22 residing in the district who is not receiving a public education" 34 CFR 104.32 (a). In addition, the Worcester Public Schools must take appropriate steps to notify students with disabilities and their caregivers about this child find duty 34 CFR 104.32 (b). Written notice of Caregiver Rights under Section 504 may be requested at your child's school or accessed through the Worcester Public Schools website:

<https://worcesterschools.org/wp-content/uploads/handbook/Section%20504%20Parents%20Rights%20Notice.pdf>

The person responsible for Section 504 at your school is the principal. Please contact your child's school or the Office of Social and Emotional Learning at 508-799-3175 if you have any questions or concerns regarding this notice or Section 504.

### **Special Education**

The mission of the Special Education Department is to provide support, technical assistance and service to schools, staff, students, families and community stakeholders as we work collaboratively to promote safe schools to maximize educational outcomes for students with disabilities. Through our efforts we are committed to partnering with families and schools to ensure the fidelity of specialized instruction, inclusion opportunities, professional learning and rigorous outcomes to ensure the individual growth and personal success of students.

### **The following key areas provides an overview of special education:**

Child Find activities includes the district providing screenings and evaluations annually for students to determine eligibility for special education and/or related services. caregiver consent is required for all evaluations and completed within 45 school working days after the caregiver provides the district with written consent.

Through the evaluations process the evaluation must assess the child in all areas related to the child's suspected disability. The evaluation results will be used to determine the child's eligibility for special education and/or related services or a 504 Plan.

Special education services provides specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child who has a disability. The Federal law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), in combination with the state's special education law (MGL c.71B) protects students with disabilities who are eligible for special education and guarantees them an Individual Education Program (IEP) designed to meet their unique needs. Special education laws and regulations are meant to protect a student with disabilities to ensure that individualized education program services are designed to make effective progress. **While not every child with a disability will require special education services, every child whose disability affects their school progress is entitled to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).**

Students are the focus of the special education process as each IEP team must discuss and create a vision for the student. A student at the age of 14 should be encouraged to be an active participant through the team process as this begins the onset of the IEP team to create a Transition Plan. The Transition Planning process should include an interest inventory, transition assessments, post-secondary goals and/or prevocational assessments for all students with a disability who are (14-22) years of age. The completion of the Transition Planning Form (TPF) allows team members to discuss what a student is interested in doing after high school and what supports they need to get there. When the student is 17 years of age, the school district must discuss with both the student and caregiver the change in rights of the student and the caregiver(s) that will occur on the student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. In Massachusetts, at age 18 the student reaches the age of majority and thus able to make their own medical and education decisions.

Another critical process for students with severe disabilities is the Chapter 688 process. This is not a continuation of special education services and is not an entitlement to services. Special education services provided while a student is in school are entitlements mandated by federal and state law. A 688 referral is to plan for needed adult services for students with severe disabilities. Filing a Chapter 688 referral is discussed by the team at least two years before the student is expected

to graduate or turn 22, as part of a transition planning. This process sets in motion a two year planning process for students whose entitlements to special education services will end when they graduate from school or turn 22 years of age. This filing results in the creation of an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) that describes how the student will connect with needed supports and services beyond school. Additional information about this process can be found at the following link: [www.doe.mass.edu/sped/links/transition.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/links/transition.html). Caregivers can also call the Parent Training Information Center at the Federation for Children with Special Needs at 1-800-331-0688, or the Director of the Bureau of Transitional Planning with The Executive Office of Health and Human Services at 617-573-1600.

Referrals are made by contacting the principal, school personnel, or the district's Manager of Special Education when requesting an evaluation for a special education eligibility. The caregiver must give consent in writing before a special education evaluation can begin. The school must contact the caregiver within five school days of receiving the referral asking for written permission and/or consent to begin the evaluation process.

Principals at each school are responsible to ensure that individual student's education plans are implemented with fidelity as written. The person responsible for assuring that the district complies with Federal and State guidelines that governs special education regulations is the Manager of Special Education and

Intervention Services. Please contact your child's school, evaluation team chairperson or the Special Education Manager if you have any questions or concerns regarding special education and your child's educational program.

Please visit <https://worcesterschools.org/about/departments-offices/special-education-intervention-services/> for additional information.

## **Employment Information and Procedures**

Employment Permits (14-18 years of age) are issued in the nine (9) secondary schools for students enrolled in those schools. Other students may obtain the permit or certificate at the Parent Information Center, 768 Main Street between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday throughout the year. Students who do not attend public schools must present proof of date of birth when applying for the certificate or permit.

Anyone under 18 years of age must obtain a work permit before starting a new job (M.G.L. c. 149 §86-89). Applications for work permits and complete information on legal limits of work hours and conditions of employment are available on the Massachusetts Department of Labor's Division of Occupational Safety website at: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/how-to-get-a-work-permit>

## **Occupation Restrictions**

### **Minors under 14 may not work**

There are a few exceptions to this such as working as news carriers, on farms, and in entertainment (with a special permit).

## **Home Hospital Educational Services 603 (CMR 28.03(3) (c)**

State regulations provide educational services to a student who is confined to the home or hospital for medical reasons for a period of not less than fourteen school days in a school year. The intent of the regulation is to provide students receiving a publicly-funded education with the opportunity to make educational progress even when a physician determines that the student is physically unable to attend school. Home/hospital educational services are not intended to replicate



the total school experience. The number of tutoring hours provided to the student will be based upon Worcester's recommendations of what is required to minimize educational loss and taking into account the medical needs of the student. The Principal and/or their designee determines the credits which will be awarded for work completed during tutoring.

Any student who will be confined to a hospital or a home by an attending physician for fourteen (14) school days or longer due to a medical condition is eligible for this service. Note that for chronically ill students, the fourteen days need not be concurrent, but must result from the stated diagnosis.

If a chronic or acute medical condition that is not temporary in nature appears likely to adversely impact a student's educational progress, the Principal and/or their designee will initiate a referral to determine eligibility for special education or 504 services.

Worcester requires students who seek home/hospital instruction to provide the Principal with a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Physician's Statement form (form 23R/3) that is completed and signed by the student's attending physician. The Principal and/or their designee may seek the caregiver's permission to speak with the physician in order to clarify the student's medical availability to receive educational services, to gather additional information and to develop a transition plan to return the student to a school setting. Students who do not provide a fully-completed and signed form will not be provided with tutoring.

The Home Hospital Department will review and approve request once in receipt of the state-mandated Physician's Statement form which must be completed by the attending physician and must include at a minimum the following information:

1. the date the student was admitted to a hospital or confined to home
2. the medical reason for the confinement
3. the expected duration of the confinement
4. the medical needs of the student that should be considered to assist in the planning the home or hospital educational services

The program begins as soon as the physician requests Home and Hospital Instruction on the Physician's Statement form and the district approves the services. Once the Home and Hospital Department receives the completed Physician's Statement, the caregiver will be contacted to coordinate the services and an instructor will be assigned to provide educational services.

## **Homeschooling**

Caregivers who choose to educate their children at home, as allowed under Massachusetts law, can fulfill the requirements of the compulsory attendance statute by having their educational programs reviewed and accepted in advance by the Worcester Public Schools. Students enrolling in homeschool for initial year must attend their assigned school until approval has been received. The notifications to homeschool (elementary and secondary versions) are available upon request from the office of Social Emotional Learning (OSEL) at (508) 799-3175. To avoid miscommunication and to ensure compliance with the homeschooling approval law, caregivers are requested to give this notice in writing. **The Worcester Public Schools shall do whatever is feasible to expedite the approval process.**

Caregivers are expected to provide evidence of their child's homeschooling program once a year. Students completing high school through homeschooling programs are not eligible for a Worcester Public Schools' Diploma.

A student being educated through Homeschooling may have access to public school activities of an extra-curricular nature (e.g. sports, clubs) with the approval of the Superintendent or designee.

The district reserves the right to allow enrolled students to have precedence or priority over the homeschooled student with regard to placement on sports teams and activities that have limited enrollment. With approval of the Superintendent or designee, and in consultation with the principal, a homeschooled student may participate in sports teams and activities that have limited enrollment provided that they do not displace an enrolled student. Homeschooled students applying to participate in district-sponsored sports must follow the athletic eligibility guidelines described on page 44.

## INSTRUCTIONAL POLICIES

### Homework Policy

The School Committee recognizes that a reasonable amount of study and preparation is necessary for the scholastic growth of all students. It is also aware that the amount of preparation should increase as the child progresses through the grades. Teachers will ensure that homework supports the district's curriculum.

Meaningful homework is connected to district expectations for accelerating academic performance, college readiness and career readiness.

Caregivers are important partners. They can support student success when they:

- ensure that students complete homework
- check work to assure quality
- stress importance of systematic study
- supervise and assist when necessary and,
- provide a suitable place to study

### Elementary Schools

The purpose of homework is to reinforce skills that are taught in the classroom. Homework assignments should be related and/or connected to the Massachusetts Frameworks.

Assignments should be an extension of the class lessons that provide students with opportunities to (1) increase or practice learning objectives, (2) engage in higher order thinking, (3) reinforce concepts and apply learning, (4) work on open ended questions and writing skills, or (5) project work.

Teachers will adhere to the following guidelines and coordinate their assignments so that students are not overloaded with homework on any particular night.

K-grade 2	Introduction to homework. Students might be asked to finish papers that were started in school or rehearse early reading skills and math skills.
Grade 3	Formal homework is introduced at this level. Students are assigned between 15 and 30 minutes of homework on a daily basis.
Grade 4	Students are assigned between 45 and 60 minutes of homework on a daily basis.
Grades 5-6	Students are assigned between one and one-and one half hours of homework on a daily basis.

## **Secondary Schools**

Homework assignments will be designed to accelerate student learning, engage students in higher order thinking and facilitate career and college readiness and should be related to the Massachusetts Frameworks in support of success on the MCAS.

Purposeful homework will vary from day to day for each student. The combined minimum daily homework for academic assignments from middle school teachers should be 120 minutes. The average minimum daily homework assignment from the high school teachers should be 45 minutes per academic subject and up to one hour for AP classes.

Teachers are responsible for including homework in their individual lesson plans and providing students with guidelines for:

- linking assignments to learning objectives that reflect and support the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, Worcester Public Schools curricula, School Improvement Plans and Worcester Public Schools benchmarks
- providing learning experiences that are both rigorous and relevant and that can be completed independently by the student
- ensuring that homework is an extension of learning that takes place in the classroom and applying the same standards of performance as applied to classroom work
- assigning homework that is explicit and of reasonable length
- ensuring that the quality of homework is more important than the quantity
- completing and evaluating assignments as part of the students' progress toward standards
- showing how homework is factored into the student grade and,
- never assigning homework as punitive work
- ensuring all students can complete the work assigned regardless of home or family access to technology or the media

Principals are responsible for encouraging school communities to embrace homework as a true extension of student learning and to evaluate the utilization of homework as part of student achievement in the learning process.

With the support and encouragement of teachers, principals, caregivers, students will be responsible for completing their homework assignments with care and constancy.

## **Process for Assigning Textbooks**

Students and caregivers are responsible for books and all other equipment issued to a student of the Worcester Public Schools. All books and equipment shall be returned by the student and in the condition in which they were issued. Reasonable wear on books and materials is anticipated due to students use.

Worcester Public Schools reserves the right to collect payment for lost or damaged textbooks and other equipment from the students and/or their caregivers.

## **Promotion Policy General**

The principal, after considering recommendations from members of the Student Support Process (SSP), may determine that a child, who is trying but lacks the maturity or has failed to grasp the basic skills, and can gain academically from an additional year at their present grade designation, may be retained for one year.

Before retaining a student, all elementary principals will meet with the SSP members to consider and discuss the nineteen (19) items of the Light's Retention Scale (without any numerical rating scores and conference with the student's caregiver(s)).

**The principal is the final authority in promotion at the building level** and for good cause may override the passing of promotional subject requirements. In all such cases, the principal must file a statement with their supervisor stating the reasons for such promotions and the steps that will be taken to provide the necessary remediation at the next level.

#### **Elementary (K- 6)**

##### **Promotional Subjects**

Grade 1

English Language Arts:  
(Reading, Language and Writing)

Grades 2-6

English Language Arts:  
(Reading, Language and Writing)  
Mathematics

Students must pass English Language Arts (Reading, Language and Writing) at the first-grade level. Students must pass English Language Arts and Mathematics from the second-grade level through the sixth-grade level.

Students in grades 2-6 must pass English Language Arts and Mathematics each year.

#### **Grades 7-8**

Middle school students must complete core academic subjects and enrichment courses that are unique to each school. All middle school students participate in physical education as required by state law (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 3).

#### **Core Academic Courses (full year)**

English Language Arts

Mathematics

Science and Technology/Engineering

History and Social Sciences

#### **Pathway/Enrichment Courses may include:**

Academic Literacy, Word Study or Intervention Reading Courses

Academic Numeracy - supplemental math course

AVID

Art

Music

Computer Literacy Health/Physical Education Family/Consumer Science

Other: Dance, Theatre, etc.

For promotion, students must pass English Language Arts and Mathematics, two (2) additional core academic subjects and two (2) enrichment courses each year. Students cannot fail ELA and Mathematics in grades 7 and 8 and pass to grade 9.

#### **Academic Dishonesty**

Cheating, plagiarism and forgery are considered to be academic dishonesty. For any work containing any information improperly submitted as one's own, or completed by means of academic dishonesty or deception, including information obtained from the Internet and not properly cited, students will receive appropriate consequences which may include suspension and require that the student redo the assignment for credit. Violation of this policy may result in discipline ranging from a student receiving a failing grade for the assignment to suspension from school.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Overview:

In accordance to the Massachusetts General Laws, the Worcester Public Schools recognizes and enforces that every child, between the ages of six and sixteen, must attend school. School personnel and caregivers must work together to ensure that all students, Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12, attend school every day, and on time, during the 180-day pupil calendar.

School attendance is a priority for the Worcester Public Schools. Students' academic, social and emotional growth and development depend upon students' daily attendance, classroom participation and exposure to high quality teaching and learning. The daily interactions among teachers and students are irreplaceable components of the learning experience. In addition, daily attendance and punctuality habits acquired during schooling are essential skills in the adulthood life, and it begins as early as the pre-school years. Students who are chronically absent from school impact their own learning and the school community as a whole. Schools can take the following steps to address absenteeism:

### School Attendance

Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. A school district may excuse up to seven day sessions or fourteen half-day sessions in any period of six months. In addition to this law, Worcester has an attendance policy and should make sure that caregivers are familiar with it.

### Excused Absences

The following is a list of absences which will not count toward retention or loss of credit:

1. **Religious holy days:** The student's religion must require that the student does not attend school on the specific holy day or that school attendance would interfere with required religious observances. The caregiver must notify the school in writing within two (2) school days before or after the absence.
2. **Death in the immediate family:** Up to five (5) consecutive days for bereavement due to the death of a member of the student's immediate family: mother, father, sister, and brother. One (1) day to attend the funeral of grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces or nephews. The caregiver must notify the school in writing within five (5) school days after the absence(s) occurred.
3. **Court appearance:** The student must have been subpoenaed to appear in a court of law. The student must be a witness, plaintiff, or defendant in a court proceeding. Within five (5) school days before or after the required court appearance, the caregiver must notify the school in writing and provide documentation from the court.
4. **Hospitalization:** The caregiver must submit to the school release papers from the hospital documenting the student's hospitalization.
5. **Illness:** The caregiver must submit to the school medical documentation of the illness that requires the student's exclusion from school. The principal has the right to require and seek additional medical opinions and diagnosis regarding a student's absence(s) due to illness.

Students who will be out of school for more than fourteen consecutive days because of illness or hospitalization may receive home or hospital instruction. For more information refer to Home and Hospital Instruction on page 64.

Family vacations taken during school time are absences. Families should plan their vacations during the regularly scheduled vacations. Non-emergency appointments should be scheduled after school hours.

### **Student Absence Notification Program**

The District will notify a student's caregiver daily of a student's absence based on morning attendance via a ConnectEd automated phone call.

Beginning with 5 absences, caregivers will receive an attendance letter via U.S. Mail with each absence. Each Principal, by whatever title they may be known, or designee shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student's caregiver, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a school year. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's caregiver. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

### **Dropout Prevention**

No student who has not graduated from high school shall be considered permanently removed from school unless the Principal has sent notice to a student, and that student's caregiver, who has been absent from school for ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absence. The notice shall be sent within five days of the tenth consecutive day of absence and shall offer at least 2 dates and times within the next ten (10) days for an exit interview with the Superintendent or designee, the student, and the student's caregiver. The notice shall be in both English and the primary language of the home, if applicable. The notice shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview and shall indicate that the parties shall reach an agreement on the date/time of the interview within the ten (10) day timeframe. The timeframe may be extended at the request of the caregiver but no extension shall exceed 14 days.

The Superintendent or their designee may proceed with any interview without a caregiver present.

### **Tardiness and Dismissal**

A student who is not in their assigned seat at the start of homeroom or class is tardy.

If a student starts school after half of the academic day has passed, then that student will be marked absent from school for that day. The student may not participate in any school activity (e.g., sports, dances, prom) during the rest of that day.

If a student leaves school before half of the academic day has passed, then that student will be marked absent from school for that day. The student may not participate in any school activity (e.g., sports, dances, prom) during the rest of that day.

Each principal will meet with the caregiver and school's faculty to develop and institute an intervention plan for students who reach 10 tardies and/or dismissals.

## **Faculty Responsibility**

Faculty members will record all absences, tardiness, and dismissals of students from their assigned classes. As students may miss some classes more frequently than others, each faculty member will be responsible for notifying the administration on occasions when notification must be sent to a caregiver.

## **Attendance Notification to Students and their Caregiver**

Caregivers are notified by phone on a daily basis if their child is absent. After five unexcused absences, the principal or their designee will notify the caregiver(s) in writing and, when appropriate, request a meeting to discuss the student's attendance. Caregivers will continue to receive written notification of their child's attendance at every 5th absence from school.

Caregivers and guardians will also receive attendance information through:

1. Interim and attendance progress reports (at five weeks into each marking period)
2. Report cards (every ten weeks). The secondary report cards show students' absences from each class and students' total absences from school

## **Retention and/or Loss of Credit**

Fourteen absences or more per school year may result in retention and/or loss of credit.

Absences accumulated due to out-of-school suspensions do not count towards a loss of academic credit. Students who are absent because of out-of-school suspensions must make up missed assignments, including homework and test(s). The principal can determine that other extenuating circumstances justify absences which do not merit a loss of academic credit.

## **Truancy**

When a student accumulates excessive unexcused absences, the principal (or their designee) may seek assistance from the Juvenile Court and/or the Department of Children and Families to resolve attendance matters.

## **High School Attendance and Academic Credit Policy**

1. Attendance is required to earn credit  
A student who has enrolled in a class is expected to be present each time the course is in session. For the 2021-22 school year, high school students will not receive credit when they exceed the following number of absences:
  - a. Fourteen (14) unexcused class absences per one-credit course
  - b. Seven (7) unexcused class absences for courses less than one credit
2. Administrative Procedure for Loss of Credit
  - a. In any case where a student fails to receive credit for any course, the final course grade will still be recorded on that student's permanent record card.
  - b. In the case where no credit is received for a course required for graduation (e.g., American History) and in which a passing grade has been received, it is required that the course be repeated.
  - c. A minimum of twenty-four (24) credits is required to graduate.
3. Attendance Buyback Program

During the 2021-22 school year, eligible high school students will be able to voluntarily participate in an Attendance Buyback Program. Through this program, students can make up the credit(s) which they lost due to excessive absences. To be eligible for the Attendance Buy-back Program, students must have passed a

course and must have between 15 and 22 absences. Eligible students who complete additional hours of instruction beyond the school day or on Saturday mornings can then receive full credit for the course. Students will not be able to change their passing grade for their course. Eligible students who are interested in this program, should contact their high school guidance counselor for additional information.

#### 4. Appeal Procedure

- a. The following areas may be considered in the appeal process:
  - Documented illness
  - Mandated school-sponsored activities School-sponsored field trips
  - Alternative Education Programs
  - Home tutoring assigned by the school
- b. Appeals for waiver of the policy will be heard by the Principal or their designee.
- c. The caregiver may appeal an adverse decision by the Principal or their designee to the Managers for Instruction and School Leadership
- d. The caregiver may appeal an adverse decision by the Managers for Instruction and School Leadership to the Superintendent
- e. The caregiver may appeal an adverse decision by the Superintendent of Schools to the School Committee. Appeals to the School Committee must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent, who will place the caregiver's or guardian's appeal on the School Committee agenda for the next regular meeting. The caregiver is to be notified of the date, time and place of the School Committee meeting.

Note: Confirmed class cuts and confirmed truancy cannot be appealed.

### **FIELD TRIP POLICY\***

The Worcester Public Schools has adopted a Field Trip Policy that is in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 346 of the Acts of 2002, An Act Relative to Safety of School Sponsored Travel. The policy establishes procedures for school sponsored student travel that is planned between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m., overnight or foreign trips, and over water or air travel.

A copy of the policy is available through the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.

Cancellation Policy: The Superintendent reserves the right to cancel an approved field trip until the time of departure. In the event of a cancellation, the school system is not responsible for any expenses incurred.

**\*The Worcester Public Schools does not condone or take responsibility for privately funded trips without authorization of the school principal.**

### **HONOR ROLL POLICY**

#### **High School**

Honor roll status in the Worcester Public Schools is determined by the individual student's average in all major subject areas. A major subject is defined as a course that yields a minimum of 1.00 unit of credit.

#### **Eligibility**

First Honors is defined as those students who receive grades of 90 or above in all major subjects.

Second Honors is defined as those students who receive grades of 80 or above in all major subjects.

Note: There is no weighting relative to courses of study.



## **Middle School**

Honor roll status in the Worcester Public Schools is determined by the individual student's average in all major subject areas and enrichments. A major subject is defined as a full year course or the equivalent thereof.

### **Eligibility**

First Honors is defined as those students who receive grades of 90 or above in all major subjects and A's in conduct and effort in all subjects including enrichments.

Second Honors is defined as those students who receive grades of 80 or above in all major subjects and A's and B's in conduct and effort in all subjects including enrichments.

Note: There is no weighting relative to courses of study.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

Throughout their education, students will take selected standardized tests. A standardized test is one that is administered under uniform and controlled conditions. This ensures that any difference in scores (pre and post-results, between students, etc.) reflect differences in knowledge and skills, rather than differences in unrelated factors such as test conditions. These tests are one of many ways educators assess what students know and can do. This can include paper-based or computer-based testing, oral and written tasks, classroom observations and portfolios of student work. These measures are used to monitor progress, refine instructional practices and improve our capacity to ensure that all students reach and exceed grade level expectations and graduate from the Worcester Public Schools career and/or college ready. Students whose caregivers opt them out of state or district standardized assessments will not be academically penalized or face disciplinary action except as prohibited by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or by the United States.

### **For Information on Testing**

For questions or concerns related to testing procedures and security or for information on your child's performance or participation in testing, please contact your child's principal or teacher. For general questions about assessment or for questions or concerns related to testing procedures and security or for information on your child's performance or participation in testing in the Worcester Public Schools, please contact the Office of School and Student Performance (508) 799-3592. You may also visit the Worcester Public Schools website for information on testing. Information from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education concerning state assessments can also be found online at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/TestingMatters.html> or by contacting the State Office of Student Assessment at (781) 338-3625.

## **HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

Because of the transition to the next generation Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests in spring of 2019, requirements for the classes of 2021-2023 reflect an interim passing standard for ELA and Mathematics defining a level of achievement on the new tests that is similar to the standard on the legacy tests. The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted in April 2021 to waive or modify the state competency determination (CD) requirement by allowing students in the class of 2022 to receive their CD by

earning full credit in an approved course and demonstrating competency in that subject, in lieu of earning a qualifying MCAS score. Students in the graduating class of 2023 will need to satisfy one of the following two conditions in both English Language Arts and Mathematics to earn a competency determination.

- Meet or exceed the scaled score threshold of 472 on the English Language Arts grade 10 MCAS test and 486 on the Mathematics grade 10 MCAS test
- Earn a scaled score between 455 and 471 on the English Language Arts grade 10 MCAS test or earn a score between 469 and 485 on the Mathematics grade 10 MCAS test and fulfill the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP)

Scaled score requirements for the class of 2024 and following years are yet to be determined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). More information can be found at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>.

In order to graduate, all students must:

- Meet one of the above criteria for competency determination through a high enough scaled score on the English Language Arts and Mathematics sections of the Grade 10 MCAS and completion of an Education Proficiency Plan (as necessary), in accordance with the guidelines set forth by DESE.
- Receive a passing score of 220 on a science section of the MCAS in one of the following: Biology, Chemistry, Engineering/Technology or Physics.
- Earn twenty-four (24) credits.
- Worcester Technical High School students must also complete the minimum required credits and required graduation subjects established for them by the School Committee.

To receive a diploma with a specific high school name, a student must meet the Worcester Public Schools graduation requirements which must include a minimum of 10 credits earned from the particular high school. If a student has earned less than 10 credits but meets the Worcester Public Schools graduation requirements, the student will be eligible to receive a generic Worcester Public Schools Diploma.

### **Graduation Course Requirements**

Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 beginning in 2021-22 school year

4 credits English

4 credits Mathematics

(Effective with the graduating class of 2019, three of the four courses must include Algebra I and II, Geometry or Trigonometry)

3 credits Science and Technology/Engineering

3 credits History/Social Science (including 1 credit World History and 1 credit

U.S. History and 1 credit chosen by the student)

2 credits Foreign Language (of the same language)

1 credit Arts

5 credits additional core courses

Additionally, students must complete a physical education course each year

1. The Worcester Public Schools adheres to the Mass Core requirements.
2. Students who successfully complete Algebra in grade 8 have the option of receiving one (1) high school credit that will be recorded on their high school transcript. (Massachusetts college admissions accept Grade 8 College Preparatory Courses, provided that the student successfully completes the

next level course with a grade of “C” or better). Students electing to take Algebra I in high school will not receive credit for Algebra taken in grade 8. Students who have earned a credit for 8th grade Algebra must complete 4 credits of Mathematics during their high school years.

3. Students in grades 7 & 8 who successfully complete high school courses in World Language will receive one high school credit per course that will be recorded on their high school transcript. Students who take Part 1 of a World Language Course in grade 8, will not receive credit for the course taken in middle school. It is recommended that students take two years or more of the same language at the high school level.
4. The intent of awarding credits for College Preparatory courses taken in grade 8 is so that students can have additional learning opportunities while in high school. These additional opportunities include but are not limited to Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, online, service learning and work-based learning courses. All students must complete 24 credits of coursework while in high school in addition to fulfilling the other graduation requirements as per the policy handbook.
5. Exception Allowances
  - a. English Language Learners (ELL) identified through the Massachusetts’ state standardized test (ACCESS) as English Proficiency Level (EPL) 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 may substitute two college preparatory elective courses for the two required foreign language courses. Students who reach EPL level 6 while in grades 9 or 10 are required to take the two foreign language courses to meet graduation requirements.
  - b. Students with disabilities whose psycho-educational evaluation provides a specific diagnosis of a learning disability that precludes the student’s successful completion of a foreign language course may substitute two college preparatory elective courses for the two required foreign language courses.
  - c. Students enrolled in Career/Vocational Technical Programs may substitute foreign language courses for an additional academic elective course plus one of the following options:
    - i. complete at least one full year of study of foreign language or
    - ii. complete a fourth year of study of science and technology/engineering or
    - iii. complete one full year of study for computer science

## **MCAS Appeals Process**

The Worcester Public Schools carries out the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s appeal processes for regular and special education high school students who have not passed MCAS. The MCAS Performance Appeals process was established in 2002 to provide eligible high school students who have been unable to pass the required MCAS tests an additional opportunity to demonstrate through their course work that they meet or exceed the state’s Competency Determination (CD) standard in order to earn a high school diploma. There are specific eligibility requirements relative to student achievement in English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science and Technology/Engineering, attendance and participation in tutorial and remediation efforts. Further information on these processes is available through your child’s school or the Office of School and Student Performance (508-799-3060). Information from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education concerning MCAS appeals can also be found online at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals/>

## Massachusetts State College and University Minimum Required Courses for Admission

<b>English</b>	4 courses
<b>Mathematics</b>	4 courses (Algebra I & II and Geometry or Trigonometry, or comparable coursework) including mathematics during the final year of high school
<b>Sciences</b>	3 courses (from Natural Science and/or Physical Science and/or Technology/ Engineering), including 3 courses with laboratory work
<b>Social Sciences</b>	3 courses (including 1 in U.S. History and 1 in World History)
<b>Foreign Languages</b>	2 courses (in a single language) <i>Note: American Sign Language (ASL) is a foreign language.</i>
<b>Electives</b>	2 courses (from the above subjects or from the Arts & Humanities or Computer Sciences)

### Advanced Placement Policy

Advanced Placement courses provide students with unique learning experiences that help ensure college success. Students engage in intense discussions, solve problems collaboratively, and learn to write clearly and persuasively, while developing time management skills, discipline and study habits. Students who achieve a score of 3, 4 or 5 on the Advanced Placement Exam may earn college credit from **many** four-year colleges in the US. Worcester Public Schools offers over 20 Advanced Placement Courses in on-site, community-based or virtual learning settings.

### Recommendations for Advanced Placement Enrollment

Students who are interested in enrolling in Advanced Placement Courses should discuss readiness for this challenging learning opportunity with their caregivers, teachers, and guidance counselors.

The indicators below may be considered together when assessing a student's readiness. One indicator is not more valuable than another in determining readiness.

- AP Potential using PSAT results
- Motivation and interest
- Course expectations and course work
- Prior grades in the same-discipline courses
- The number of same-discipline courses taken

Teachers may assign work to students during the summer to help prepare them for the course.

### Advanced Placement Exams

The Worcester Public Schools will pay for the AP exams for those students who choose to take them.

### **Class Rank Grade Point Average**

Class rank is computed at the end of the 6th semester, using major subjects only. Class rank will be recomputed at the end of the second marking period senior year for determining the valedictorian and for processing of college applications. The student grades are weighted as follows:

<b>Average</b>	<b>A.P.</b>	<b>Honors</b>	<b>College</b>
100-99	5.3	4.8	4.3
98-97	5.2	4.7	4.2
96	5.1	4.6	4.1
95-94	5.0	4.5	4.0
93	4.9	4.4	3.9
92	4.8	4.3	3.8
91	4.7	4.2	3.7
90	4.6	4.1	3.6
89	4.4	3.9	3.4
88	4.3	3.8	3.3
87	4.2	3.7	3.2
86	4.1	3.6	3.1
85	4.0	3.5	3.0
84	3.9	3.4	2.9
83	3.8	3.3	2.8
82	3.7	3.2	2.7
81	3.6	3.1	2.6
80	3.4	2.9	2.4
79	3.3	2.8	2.3
78	3.2	2.7	2.2
77	3.1	2.6	2.1
76	3.0	2.5	2.0
75	2.9	2.4	1.9
74	2.8	2.3	1.8
73	2.7	2.2	1.7
72	2.6	2.1	1.6
71	2.4	1.9	1.4
70	2.3	1.8	1.3
69	2.2	1.7	1.2
68	2.1	1.6	1.1
67	1.9	1.4	0.9
66	1.8	1.3	0.8
65	1.7	1.2	0.7
64-0	0.0	0.0	0.0

### **Marking System**

A=100-90    B=89-80    C=79-70    D=69-65    F=64-0

### **Early College Program: College Courses for High School Students**

High school students in the Worcester Public Schools who wish to pursue advanced or specialized courses beyond those offered in their high schools may take courses at these area colleges:

Anna Maria College  
Assumption College  
Becker College  
Clark University

College of the Holy Cross  
Quinsigamond Community College  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute\*  
Worcester State University

\*Worcester Polytechnic Institute offers courses at reduced tuition to high school students.

With a Guidance Counselor's recommendation and approval by the college/university, students may take one college course per semester as agreed upon by the Worcester Public Schools and the individual college/university. Students receive dual enrollment credit for courses taken at area colleges. For GPA computation, Worcester Public Schools students will receive the same weight as an A.P. course for each completed college course.

### **MA Seal of Biliteracy**

The Worcester Public Schools will offer the MA Seal of Biliteracy to graduating seniors on their diplomas and transcripts. The MA Seal of Biliteracy recognizes graduates who speak, listen, read and write proficiently in English and a second or even third language.

By offering the MA Seal of Biliteracy to its students the Worcester Public Schools recognizes, honors and encourages the bilingual students and diverse communities in Worcester and encourages all students to pursue proficiency in more than one language. Bilingualism is a critical 21<sup>st</sup> century skill that recipients of the MA Seal of Biliteracy can highlight in both college and job applications.

In order to earn the MA Seal of Biliteracy, students must meet all their graduation requirements, demonstrate proficiency in English through the ELA MCAS or ACCESS, and show proficiency in a target language by earning 4 or 5 in an AP Language Exam or other state-approved language test provided by the district.

Students interested in participating in the MA Seal of Biliteracy program must complete an application available in the guidance office, on the Worcester Public Schools' website or scan the QR Code included here by the Fall of their Senior year.

Questions about the MA Seal of Biliteracy program can be directed to Michelle Huaman, World Languages Liaison ([huamanm@worcesterschools.net](mailto:huamanm@worcesterschools.net)) or Carmen Melendez-Quintero, Manager of English Learner Programs ([Melendezquinteroc@worcesterschools.net](mailto:Melendezquinteroc@worcesterschools.net))



## **GENERAL SCHOOL ISSUES**

### **Delayed School Opening/Early Dismissal/School Cancellation Policy**

The School Administration will exercise one of the following options when weather conditions dictate a change in the normal opening of the school day:

1. Cancellation of school

2. Delay of one hour in the opening of school
  3. Delay of two hours in the opening of school
- If a delay is in effect, a.m. preschool will be cancelled; p.m. preschool will be held.

### **Delayed AM School Opening**

If there is a one-hour delay in the opening of school, all procedures now in place will be delayed by one hour. A two-hour delay requires that all procedures in place be delayed by two hours. These procedures include:

1. reporting time of pupils
2. pick up time of all bus routes (i.e.: If a bus normally picks up a child at 7:15 a.m. in a one-hour delay it would be 8:15 a.m. If a bus normally picks up a child at 7:15 a.m., in a two-hour delay it would be 9:15 a.m.)

### **Early Dismissal**

**\*Please note:** When schools are dismissed early, all after-school programs including daycare are canceled. Early dismissal time is two hours earlier than each school's regular dismissal time.

### **No School/Delayed School Opening/Early Dismissal Announcements**

Announcements of no school, a delay in the opening of school, or early dismissal from school will be made via a Connect Ed message, on the Worcester Public Schools' website ([worcesterschools.org](http://worcesterschools.org)), district social media, and on the following radio and television stations:

WTAG 580 AM	WXLO 104.5 FM	WORC 1310 AM
WSRS 96.1 FM	WBZ 1030 AM	WCUW 93.1 FM*
WHDH-TV Channel 7	WCVB-TV Channel 5	
WBZ-TV Channel 4	WFXT-TV Channel 25	

\*This announcement is broadcast in Spanish between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. on WCUW FM 93.1.

Radio stations have requested that students and caregivers refrain from calling to make inquiries as to the status of school.

### **Policy Statement and Procedural Guidelines for Recess**

Quality education requires a healthy learning environment that provides students (K-6) with minimally a total of 30 minutes of recess over the course of the day.

The 30 minutes can be divided into shorter breaks and shall include a break at lunch. Recess is designed for the purpose of engaging students in developmentally appropriate activity which promotes learning, social development, and physical health. Structured/unstructured recess shall rarely be taken away from students as a form of punishment/consequences. Neither shall severe exercise be used as a form of punishment/consequences for students. This time shall not be a substitute for physical education.

The School Principal is responsible for communicating, applying, maintaining, and evaluating the Recess Policy. The School Principal shall review the Recess Policy with the members of the School Site Council annually and submit results of that review to the Deputy Superintendent in May of each year.

### **Procedural Guidelines**

Recess shall occur outside, weather permitting, **or unless circumstances dictate otherwise for a limited period.** Students shall be supervised by adult, staff members, caregiver s, or school learning community volunteers. The school principal shall insure that adults receive appropriate training to support students and intended outcomes. The school principal shall insure that students are provided with developmentally appropriate equipment. Public spaces in proximity to the school, such as parks and public playgrounds may be appropriate substitutions for play space at the school.

The School Committee shall equitably support budgetary requirements needed for recess equipment for all elementary schools. This allocation will be in addition to the per pupil allocation provided to each school. Each school principal shall have autonomy to expend allocations to support the needs of students for recess.

## **CAREGIVERS AND COMMUNITY**

### **Parent Advisory Councils**

#### **School Councils**

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993, Section 59C, requires the establishment of school councils in all schools, comprised of caregivers of students attending the school who shall be selected by the caregivers of students attending the school, teachers, students and community representatives and co-chaired by school principals. The council should be broadly representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the school building and community. The council will meet with the principal and assist in identifying the educational needs of students, reviewing the annual school budget and in formulating a school improvement plan. For additional information please contact your child's school principal.

### **Special Education Parent Advisory Council**

The parent advisory council duties shall include but not be limited to: advising the school committee in matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities, meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs.

The SEPAC provides ongoing professional development and networking to families of students with disabilities and the opportunity to discuss common areas of interest and specific needs regarding the education and well-being of students with disabilities. Caregivers meet four times during the school year to engage in various activities or selected topics of interest. These meetings provide opportunities for caregivers to share and collaborate as they deepen their understanding of the procedural regulations that govern special education, as well as various resources available for students with disabilities and their families. For additional information, please email [sealek@worcesterschools.net](mailto:sealek@worcesterschools.net).



### **English Learner Parent Advisory Committee (ELPAC)**

The purpose of ELPAC is to support the academic success of English learners (ELs) and former English learners (FELs) by providing a forum in which caregivers of current and former English learners can express their perspectives and provide input to the District.

The duties of the council include: (1) advising the school district and school committee on matters that pertain to English learners; (ii) meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning and development of programs designed to improve educational opportunities for English learners; and (iii) participating in the review of school improvement plans.

The WPS English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) was established in 2018-2019. The ELPAC consists of caregivers and guardians of current and former English learners, community members, and teachers and district staff members. Meetings are a venue for meaningful discussions about Dual Language, Transitional Bilingual Education, Sheltered English Immersion, and English as a Second Language, as well as other topics related to the education of current and former English learners. Caregivers of current and former English learners are encouraged to attend the ELPAC meetings that are held throughout the school year. For additional information, please email [melendezquinteroc@worcesterschools.net](mailto:melendezquinteroc@worcesterschools.net).

### **Citywide Parent Planning Advisory Council (CPPAC)**

Each school is represented by two (2) caregiver members selected by their caregiver group and principals. Meetings are held every other month. The objectives of the CPPAC are:

1. To involve caregivers in addressing relevant issues in the Worcester Public Schools including integration and changing (increasing/ decreasing) enrollment.
2. To provide an open forum for discussion between caregivers and administrators regarding school issues and voted policies.
3. To give its members the responsibility of keeping their respective schools informed.

For additional information email [contactcppac@gmail.com](mailto:contactcppac@gmail.com).

### **Caregiver and Family Engagement**

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools to promote caregiver and family engagement in accord with Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.

The WPS conducts outreach to caregivers and family members; implements programs, activities and procedures to involve caregivers and family members in the Title I programs, and plans and implements such programs, activities and procedures with meaningful consultation with caregivers and family members. The Office of English Learners and the WPS works with schools, caregivers and community partners in a variety of ways to facilitate verbal and written communication in a language that family members can understand.

### **Opportunities for Caregiver Support**

Please see the district website or contact your school for information on community resources available to caregivers.

## **Volunteer Staff Regulations**

### **Application Process**

All school volunteers must fill out a volunteer application which can be obtained at the school or on the WPS website. This applies to any individual who volunteers in school property or for school activities, including field trips. All volunteers must go through a screening process prior to beginning service. This includes the CORI process.

### **Screening Process**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has mandated that all school volunteers must complete the CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) screening process. This process must be completed before the volunteer begins in any school or program. As the CORI check can take several weeks, all volunteers are encouraged to complete the CORI form as soon as possible. Please be aware that CORI checks expire every three years and need to be resubmitted to the Human Resource Office.

### **Volunteer Organizations**

There have been a number of initiatives in the community to strengthen school volunteer programs. Some of these include:

- State Employees Voluntary Leave Services Program
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P.)
- Transitional Assistance Program (Welfare Office)

These types of initiatives are very specific about requirements for participation.

### **Caregiver Volunteers who bring Children**

Some caregiver volunteers have come to school to perform a volunteer assignment and have brought young children with them. Each principal is responsible for developing a building policy in conjunction with their School Council regarding this issue.

If your building does allow younger children to accompany caregiver volunteers, these caregivers must perform tasks that are safe and harmless to young children.

These volunteers must not operate machinery such as:

- paper cutters
- copying machines

**ALL** volunteers must sign in at the office. caregiver volunteers must sign in both themselves and any child that accompanies them.

## **Worcester Public School District Media Policy**

**Purpose:** During the school year, your child may have opportunities to have their work or activities publicized. Examples include, but not limited to: student work published on the district website and social media channels; feature stories about student performances or school-wide events in newspapers or on television (the district's Charter Channel 191 WEA-TV or local/national coverage); and photographs and videos of students "in action" on the website and social media channels, and in local and regional newspapers. Students first names and last initials (example: Paul F.) are used to identify pictures of three or fewer students and student work on the district website and social media channels. When reporters visit the district, they often speak with students and use their full names in covering the story.

**General Media Coverage:** Throughout the year there may be in-school programs, events or meetings (such as a school-wide assembly or PTA event) that are open to the public and where large group photographs or videotapes will be taken by caregivers, the media, or school district staff. In these cases, students would not be identified by name. Your consent to these types of group photographs or videotapes is assumed. If you do not want your child photographed or video-taped at these public events, please speak with the principal or event coordinator to insure that your child is excluded from the coverage.

**Procedure:** Any caregiver who does not want their student's name, photograph, or work published on the district's website and social media channels, or included in newspaper or television coverage must complete and return the form on the inside back cover of this handbook to the homeroom teacher.

# TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

## SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Burncoat .....	(508) 799-3300
Claremont Academy .....	(508) 799-3077
Doherty Memorial .....	(508) 799-3270
North.....	(508) 799-3370
South High Community.....	(508) 799-3325
The Gerald Creamer Center .....	(508) 799-3476
Worcester Technical High School .....	(508) 799-1940
Alternative St. Casimir .....	(508) 799-3245
University Park Campus.....	(508) 799-3591

## MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Burncoat .....	(508) 799-3390
Claremont Academy .....	(508) 799-3077
Forest Grove .....	(508) 799-3420
Sullivan Middle .....	(508) 799-3350
Worcester East Middle .....	(508) 799-3430
Challenge and Reach Academies.. .....	(508) 799-0077

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Belmont .....	(508) 799-3588	May .....	(508) 799-3520
Burncoat .....	(508) 799-3537	McGrath .....	(508) 799-3584
Canterbury.....	(508) 799-3484	Midland .....	(508) 799-3548
Chandler Elementary .....	(508) 799-3572	Nelson Place.....	(508) 799-3506
Chandler Magnet.....	(508) 799-3452	Norrback.....	(508) 799-3500
City View .....	(508) 799-3670	Quinsigamond .....	(508) 799-3502
Clark.....	(508) 799-3545	Rice Square.....	(508) 799-3556
Columbus Park.....	(508) 799-3490	Roosevelt .....	(508) 799-3482
Elm Park .....	(508) 799-3568	Tatnuck.....	(508) 799-3554
Flagg.....	(508) 799-3522	Thorndyke .....	(508) 799-3550
Gates Lane .....	(508) 799-3488	Union Hill.....	(508) 799-3600
Goddard School of Science and Technology.....	(508) 799-3594	University Park Campus School .....	(508) 799-3591
Grafton.....	(508) 799-3478	Vernon Hill.....	(508) 799-3630
Heard .....	(508) 799-3525	Wawecus.....	(508) 799-3527
Hiatt .....	(508) 799-3601	West Tatnuck .....	(508) 799-3596
Lake View.....	(508) 799-3536	Woodland Academy..	(508) 799-3557
Lincoln.....	(508) 799-3504	Worcester Arts Magnet.	(508) 799-3575

Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center .....	(508) 799-3299, (508) 799-3068,
.....	(508) 799-3069, (508) 799-3450
Dr. James A. Caradonio New Citizen Center.....	(508) 799-3494

## MANAGERS' OFFICE

Burncoat/South.....	(508) 799-3264
Doherty/North/Worcester Technical .....	(508) 799-3221

# **Massachusetts Parental Notice for One Time Consent to Allow the School District To Access MassHealth (Medicaid) Benefits**

## **WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL SERVICES**

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL-BASED MEDICAID PROGRAM**

Dear Caregiver,

As of July 1, 2019 school districts may bill Mass Health for health care services that students receive at school. Included services are vision, hearing, dental, postural, growth and SBIRT screenings, behavioral and mental health counseling, speech and direct nursing care of students with complex medical needs. This billing in no way affects your child's Mass Health coverage outside of school or any homecare services your child receives.

The School-Based Medicaid Program offers schools an opportunity to receive federal money to offset the costs for providing the above Medicaid-covered services in the school setting. The reimbursement is to the City of Worcester and therefore will benefit both the City and school finances.

Please take a moment, complete the form below and return it to your child's school nurse. Should you have questions, require additional information or translation of the caregiver consent form please don't hesitate to contact me.

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**Dr. Debra McGovern, DNP, BCPNP**  
**Director of School Nursing**

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*School District Name and Code:* **Worcester Public Schools 0348**  
*School/District Contact:* **Dr. Debra McGovern – 508-799-8554**  
**Director of School Nursing**

Dear Caregiver:

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your permission (also known as consent) to share information about your child with MassHealth. Local communities in Massachusetts have been approved to receive partial reimbursement from MassHealth for the costs of certain health-related services provided by the district to your child (or children). In order for your community to get back some of the money spent on services, the school district needs to share with MassHealth the following types of information about your child: name; date of birth; gender; type of services provided, when, and by whom; and MassHealth ID.

With your permission, the school district will be able to seek partial reimbursement for services provided by MassHealth, including, among others, a hearing test or eye exam; a school physical; occupational or speech or physical therapy; some school nurse visits; and counseling services with the school social worker or psychologist. Each year, the district will provide you with notification regarding your permission; you do not need to sign a form every year.

The school district cannot share with MassHealth information about your child without your permission. As you consider giving permission, please be advised of the following:

1. The school district cannot require you to sign up for MassHealth in order for your child to receive the health-related and/or special education services to which your child is entitled.
2. The school district cannot require you to pay anything towards the cost of your child's health-related and/or special education services. This means that the school district cannot require you to pay a co-pay or deductible so that it can charge MassHealth for services provided. The school district can agree to pay the co-pay or deductible if any such cost is expected.
3. If you give the school district permission to share information with and request reimbursement from MassHealth:
  - a. This will not affect your child's available lifetime coverage or other MassHealth benefit; nor will it in any way limit your own family's use of MassHealth benefits outside of school.
  - b. Your permission will not affect your child's special education services or IEP rights in any way, if your child is eligible to receive them.
  - c. Your permission will not lead to any changes in your child's MassHealth rights; and
  - d. Your permission will not lead to any risk of losing eligibility for other Medicaid or MassHealth funded programs.
4. If you give permission, you have the right to change your mind and withdraw your permission at any time.
5. If you withdraw your permission or refuse to allow the school district to share your child's records and information with MassHealth for the purpose of seeking reimbursement for the cost of services, the school district will continue to be responsible for providing your child with the services, at no cost to you.

**I have read the notice and understand it. Any questions I had were answered. I give permission to the school district to share with MassHealth records and information concerning my child(ren) and their health-related services, as necessary. I understand that this will help our community seek partial reimbursement of MassHealth covered services.**

Caregiver Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name	Date of Birth	SASID # (for district to add)
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Child's Name	Date of Birth	SASID # (for district to add)
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Child's Name	Date of Birth	SASID # (for district to add)
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Massachusetts DESE Mandated Form 28M/13 Revised June 2018

## WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT MEDIA POLICY

**Purpose:** During the school year, your child may have opportunities to have their work or activities publicized. Examples include, but not limited to: student work published on the district website(s); feature stories about student performances or school-wide events in newspapers or on television (the district's Charter Channel 191 WEA-TV or local/national coverage); and photographs and videos of students "in action" on the website(s) and in local and regional newspapers. Students first names and last initials (example: Paul F.) are used to identify pictures of three or fewer students and student work on the district website(s). When reporters visit the district, they often speak with students and use their full names in covering the story.

**General Media Coverage:** Throughout the year there may be in-school programs, events or meetings (such as a school-wide assembly or PTA event) that are open to the public and where large group photographs or videotapes will be taken by caregivers, the media, or school district staff. In these cases, students would not be identified by name. Your consent to these types of group photographs or videotapes is assumed. If you do not want your child photographed or video-taped at these public events, please speak with the principal or event coordinator to insure that your child is excluded from the coverage.

## OPT-OUT PROVISIONS FOR WPS DISTRICT MEDIA POLICY

Please check only those items that you do not grant permission to.

### Publication of Student Work on the Internet

☐

I/We **do not grant** permission for this student's work to be published on the School District Website(s).

### Publication of Student First Name, Last Initial and/or Photograph on the Internet

☐

I/We **do not grant** permission for photographs that include this student to be published on the School District Website(s), using the student's first name and last initial to identify them.

### Interviews and Photographs with Newspapers, Radio, and Television Reporters

☐

I/We **do not grant** permission for this student to be photographed or interviewed by reporters who are covering events in the School District.

**\*If a box is unchecked and the caregiver signs the student handbook, your consent is granted for the full school year. This decision can be changed at any time by contacting your child's school in writing.**

To All Caregivers and Guardians:

Please spend some time discussing these policies within this booklet with your children. Your signature below confirms that you have reviewed it.

The policies in this handbook pertain to student actions both on and off school grounds during school and school-related situations (including transportation to and from school). In addition to the academic year, the policies set forth in the handbook apply to all after-school and summer programs.

The Worcester Public Schools and the School Committee consider the violation of the Weapons Policy found in this booklet to be a serious matter. Please review the Worcester Public Schools Media Policy **on the opposite side of this page**.

The School Committee requires that all caregivers of students in the Worcester Public Schools sign the statement below acknowledging receipt of this handbook and return it to their child's school.

As a caregiver of a student within the Worcester Public Schools, I acknowledge receipt of the 2021-2022 Policies Handbook for the Worcester Public Schools. The Worcester Public Schools does participate in out-of-district School Choice, but students residing outside of the City can attend the Worcester Public Schools only if they are accepted for enrollment under this program. Unless accepted under this program, I pledge residency in the City of Worcester.

(Student's Name)		(School)

(Caregiver Signature)		(Date)

Worcester Public Schools' students enrolled in secondary schools are also required to sign below, acknowledging receipt of this handbook and knowledge of the policies contained within this handbook.

(Student Signature)		(Date)