



# Palmer Public Schools

2021-2022

## Student/Guardian Handbook



**OLD MILL POND SCHOOL**



**PALMER HIGH SCHOOL**

**DISTRICT VISION:** Palmer Public Schools will be a community that develops lifelong learners by engaging in a rigorous curriculum which creates opportunities for academic and social/emotional growth of all students through a safe, supportive, and collaborative environment.

***Disclaimer:*** This handbook reflects the current status of District rules and policies put forth by the School Committee of the Palmer Public Schools.

Approved 10/20/2021

#### ALBANIAN

Nëse keni vështirësi për ta kuptuar këtë dokument, lutemi kontaktoni drejtorin/shkollën e fëmijës suaj.

#### ARABIC

إن وجدت أية صعوبة في فهم هذه الوثيقة، يُرجى الاتصال بمدرسة طفلك أو بمديرها.

#### CHINESE

如阁下理解本文件有困难，请与阁下子女的学校 / 校长联络。

#### FRENCH

Si vous rencontrez des difficultés pour comprendre ce document, veuillez contacter le principal ou l'école de votre enfant.

#### JAPANESE

本文についてわかりにくい点がありましたら、お子様の学校あるいは校長までご連絡ください。

KOREAN 이 문서를 이해하는데 힘든 점이 있으면 자녀의 학교나 학교장에게 문의해 주시기 바랍니다.

#### POLISH

Jeśli masz trudności ze zrozumieniem tego dokumentu, skontaktuj się ze szkołą Twojego dziecka lub jej dyrektorem.

#### PORTUGUESE

Caso haja problemas na compreensão deste documento, entre em contato com a directoria da escola de seu/sau filho/a.

#### RUSSIAN

Если у вас возникают трудности с пониманием данного документа, пожалуйста, обратитесь к директору школы, в которой учится ваш ребенок.

#### SPANISH

Si tiene dificultad para entender este documento, contacte al director o a la escuela de su hijo.

#### UKRAINIAN

Якщо у вас виникають труднощі з розумінням цього документу, будь ласка, зверніться до директора школи, в якій навчається ваша дитина.

#### URDU

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کو سمجھنے میں دشواری ہے، تو برائے مہربانی اپنے بچے کے سکول/پرنسپل سے رابطہ کریں۔

#### VIETNAMESE

Nếu quý vị gặp khó khăn để hiểu văn bản này, xin vui lòng liên hệ với trường/hiệu trưởng của con quý vị.

English Translation, "If you have difficulty understanding this document, please contact your child's school/principal."

PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Student/Guardian Handbook  
2021-2022

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### **DISTRICT-WIDE MASK MANDATE as of 8/25/2021**

On August 24, 2021, the Massachusetts Board of Education supported Commissioner Riley's proposal for a mask mandate through October 1, 2021. The School Committee approved this mandate to be in effect until the October 20, 2021 School Committee meeting for discussion.

- Public school students (age 5 and above) and staff in all grades are required to wear masks indoors in schools, except when:
  - eating
  - drinking
  - taking mask breaks
- Masks may also be removed indoors when necessary to participate in elective classes, such as the use of wind instruments in Band.
- Masks are required for any sports-related activity for student-athletes and coaches when indoors.
- Masks are not required when outdoors.
- All visitors are also expected to wear a mask in school buildings.
- Masks should cover an individual's nose and mouth. Proper techniques for wearing masks will be reviewed on a weekly basis.
- It is strongly recommended that students younger than age 5 also wear a mask in school.
- Students and staff who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons, and students who cannot wear a mask for behavioral reasons, are exempt from the requirement. Face shields may be an option for students with medical or behavioral needs who are unable to wear masks or face coverings. Transparent masks may be the best option for both teachers and students in classes for deaf and hard of hearing students.
- Mask breaks may occur throughout the day. If feasible, breaks should occur when the windows are open or students are outdoors.
- Mask breaks will be held at least once during each 84-minute block at Palmer High School.
- Masks will be worn on all public forms of transportation.
- Masks should be provided by the student/family, but disposable masks will be made available as needed.
- Whether and when a student should be disciplined for failure to wear a mask is a local decision, guided by the district's student discipline policy and the particular facts. See Code of Conduct for further information.
- Gaiters, valve-masks, and bandanas are prohibited.

Approved by School Committee 8/25/2021

## DISTRICT POLICIES & PROCEDURES



**2019-2020**

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## **ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY – TECHNOLOGY**

### Purpose

The Palmer Public Schools shall provide access for employees and students to the system/network, including access to external networks, for limited educational purposes. Educational purposes shall be defined as classroom activities, career and professional development, and high quality self-discovery activities of an educational nature. The purpose of the system/network is to assist in preparing students for success in life and work by providing access to a wide range of information and the ability to communicate with others. The system/network will be used to increase communication (staff, parent, and student), enhance productivity, and assist staff in upgrading existing skills and acquiring new skills through a broader exchange of information. The system/network will also be utilized to provide information to the community, including parents, governmental agencies, and businesses.

### Availability

The Superintendent or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate the District's system/network for instructional and administrative purposes.

Access to the system/network, including external networks, shall be made available to employees and students for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures.

Access to the system/network is a privilege, not a right. All users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of all administrative regulations and procedures governing use of the system and shall agree in writing to comply with such regulations and procedures. Noncompliance with applicable regulations and procedures may result in suspension or termination of user privileges and other disciplinary actions consistent with the policies of the Palmer Public Schools. Violations of law may result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the Palmer Public Schools.

### Acceptable Use

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative regulations, procedures, and user agreements, consistent with the purposes and mission of the Palmer Public Schools as well as with law and policy governing copyright.

### Monitored Use

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of electronic resources by students and employees shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated staff to ensure appropriate use for instructional and administrative purposes.

### *1 of 2 Palmer Public Schools*

### Liability

The Palmer Public Schools shall not be liable for users' inappropriate use of electronic resources or violations of copyright restrictions, users' mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users. The Palmer Public Schools shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on external networks. The Palmer Public School District is committed to providing secure and error-free computing and Internet access and cannot be held responsible for loss of data or damage to personal equipment including but not limited to, 3 ½ diskettes and flash memory external storage devices, due to technical difficulties.

CROSS REF.: IJND, Curriculum and Instruction

*Revised and approved on 5/18/06.*

## **ATHLETIC CONCUSSION- District POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and standardized procedures for persons involved in the prevention, training management and return to activity decisions regarding students who incur head injuries

while involved in extracurricular athletic activities including, but not limited to, interscholastic sports, in order to protect their health and safety as required by Massachusetts law and regulations. The requirements of the law apply to all public middle and high schools, however configured, serving grades six through high school graduation. In addition to any training required by law, the following persons shall complete one of the head injury safety training programs approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) as found on its website: coaches; certified athletic trainers; trainers; volunteers; school and team physicians; school nurses; athletic directors; directors responsible for a school marching band; employees or volunteers; and students who participate in an extracurricular activity and their parents. See School Committee Manual for full description.

Most student athletes who sustain a concussion can fully recover as long as their brain has time to heal before sustaining another hit; however, relying only on an athlete's self-report of symptoms to determine injury recovery is inadequate as many high school athletes are not aware of the signs and symptoms or the severity concussive injuries pose, or they may feel pressure from coaches, parents, and/or teammates to return to play as quickly as possible. One or more of these factors will likely result in under diagnosing the injury and a premature return to play. Massachusetts General Laws and Department of Public Health regulations make it imperative to accurately assess and treat student athletes when concussions are suspected.

Student athletes who receive concussions may appear to be "fine" on the outside, when in actuality they have a brain injury and are not able to return to play. Incurring a second concussion can prove to be devastating to a student athlete. Research has shown that young concussed athletes who return to play before their brain has healed are highly vulnerable to more prolonged post-concussion syndrome or, in rare cases, a catastrophic neurological injury known as Second Impact Syndrome.

The following protocol will discuss and outline what a concussion is, the mechanism of injury, signs and symptoms, management and return to play requirements, as well as information on *Second Impact Syndrome* and *Past Concussion Syndrome*. Lastly, this policy will discuss the importance of education for our athletes, coaches and parents and other persons required by law.

This protocol should be reviewed on a yearly basis with all staff to discuss the procedures to be followed to manage sports-related concussions. This protocol will also be reviewed on a yearly basis by the athletic department as well as by the nursing staff. Any changes in this document will be approved by the school committee and given to athletic staff, including coaches and other school personnel in writing. An accurate synopsis of this policy shall be placed in the student and faculty handbooks. LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 111:222; 105 CMR 201.000

## ATHLETIC CONCUSSION REGULATIONS

### Section I. What is a Concussion?

A concussion is defined as a transient alteration in brain function without structural damage, but with other potentially serious long-term ramifications. In the event of a concussion, the brain sustains damage at a microscopic level in which cells and cell membranes are torn and stretched. The damage to these cells also disrupts the brain at a chemical level, as well as causing restricted blood flow to the damaged areas of the brain, thereby disrupting brain function. A concussion, therefore, is a disruption in how the brain works; it is not a structural injury. Concussions are difficult to diagnose because the damage cannot be seen. A MRI or CT Scan cannot diagnose a concussion, but they can help rule out a more serious brain injury to a student athlete.



Because concussions are difficult to detect, student athletes must obtain medical approval before returning to athletics following a concussion.

#### Section II. Mechanism of Injury:

A concussion is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body. Any force that causes the brain to bounce around or twist within the skull can cause a concussion. A bump, blow or jolt to the head or body can be caused by either indirect or direct trauma. The two direct mechanisms of injury are coup-type and contrecoup-type. Coup-type injury is when the head is stationary and struck by a moving object such as another player's helmet, a ball, or sport implement, causing brain injury at the location of impact. Contrecoup-type injury occurs when the head is moving and makes contact with an immovable or slowly moving object as a result of deceleration, causing brain injury away from the sight of impact. Indirect forces are transmitted through the spine and jaw or blows to the thorax that whip the head while the neck muscles are relaxed. Understanding the way in which an injury occurred is vital in understanding and having a watchful eye for athletes who may exhibit symptoms of a concussion so these student athletes can receive the appropriate care.

#### Section III. Signs and Symptoms:

<b>Signs (what you see):</b>	<b>Symptoms (reported by student):</b>
Confusion	Headache
Forgets plays	Fatigue
Unsure about game, score, opponent	Nausea or vomiting
Altered coordination	Double vision/ blurry vision
Balance problems	Sensitivity to light (photophobia)
Personality change	Sensitivity to noise (tinnitus)
Slow response to questions	Feels sluggish
Forgets events prior to injury (retrograde amnesia)	Feels foggy
Forgets events after injury (anterograde amnesia)	Problems concentrating
Loss of consciousness (any duration)	Problems remembering
	Trouble with sleeping/ excess sleep
	Dizziness
	Sadness
	Seeing stars
	Vacant stare/ glassy eyed
	Nervousness
	Irritability
	Inappropriate emotions

If any of the above signs or symptoms are observed after a suspected blow to the head, jaw, spine or body, they may be indicative of a concussion and the student must be removed from play immediately and not return until cleared by an appropriate allied health professional.

#### **BULLYING PREVENTION**

(M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370)

Translation Requests - If you would like a translation of the District's Bullying & Intervention Plan, please contact the office of the Principal.

Palmer Public Schools is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process. Central to the safe learning environment established at PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS is the understanding that it is everyone's responsibility to act respectfully, to model exemplary behaviors, and to challenge offensive behaviors when they occur. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying.

PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS has adapted the Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan required under M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370 to create the PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Plan is available for public perusal on the PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Website. In addition, PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS students, parents/guardians, staff, administration and the PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS School Committee receive a copy of the Plan at the start of each school year.

M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 defines bullying as the repeated use by one or more students or staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;

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

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 for the complete legal definition of cyberbullying. Within the law and for the purposes of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyberbullying.

The PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan addresses the vital issues needed to effectively and decisively address bullying within the PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS school community. Those issues, which are mandated by law and clearly delineated in the PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Plan are: Training and Professional Development, Access to Resources and Services, Academic and Non-Academic Activities; Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation; Collaboration with Families, Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation, the Pertinent Definitions and the Relationship of the Bullying Statute to Other Laws.

Included within the PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Plan are the following reporting resources: a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Report/Response MAP, a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form, and a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

The PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is the PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Bullying Prevention Policy, and as such it is subject to be reviewed and updated at least biennially, under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent-Director/Principal.

## DEFINITIONS PERTINENT TO THE PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS BULLYING INITIATIVE

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as noted below. PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS may have added specific language to these definitions to clarify them, but has not altered their meaning or scope. The PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Plan also includes additional definitions that are aligned with PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS policies and procedures.

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

Bullying (See definition above)

Cyberbullying (See definition above)

Harassment at PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS is synonymous with the definition of bullying from M.G.L. c. 71, §37O for the purposes of disciplinary action, with the exception of sexual and criminal harassment which are governed by state and federal law.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Intimidating Behavior at PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS is use by one or more students or staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at another student, that makes that student feel fearful and/or uncomfortable at school or that causes an interruption in the educational process. Intimidating behavior as a code within the PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Code of Conduct is intended to identify behavior that goes beyond student on student disrespect and suggests that the behavior has the potential to fall into the category of bullying. For the purposes of the PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Code of Conduct, three or more incidents of intimidating behavior equate to bullying as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, §37O.

Progressive Discipline is a behavioral management approach which utilizes a system of levels of predetermined consequences for specific offenses to maintain a safe and secure school environment. The hallmark of progressive discipline at PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS is a balance of preventative measures, respect, and common sense disciplinary values. PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS administrators and staff strive to maintain a disciplinary process which is both fair and consistent and protects the rights of all members of the PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS school community. Central to the PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS progressive discipline approach is the understanding that the disciplinary process is a dimension of the learning environment within our school. It is everyone's responsibility to act respectfully, to model exemplary behaviors, and to challenge offensive behaviors when they occur. See Palmer Public Schools Policy Manual for full description.

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

Round table discussions are gatherings of target(s), aggressor(s) and their parents/guardians with the principal and/or his designee, select school personnel, and the school resource officer to address bullying and cyberbullying incidents with the purpose of de-escalation of the situation and prevention of further incidents. Participation by target(s) is voluntary.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, the following: educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals. See School Committee Policy Manual for full description.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Section 51A. (a) A mandated reporter who, in his professional capacity, has reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from: (i) abuse inflicted upon him which causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare, including sexual abuse; (ii) neglect, including malnutrition; (iii) physical dependence upon an addictive drug at birth, shall immediately communicate with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) orally and, within 48 hours, shall file a written report with the department detailing the suspected abuse or neglect; or (iv) being a sexually exploited child; or (v) being a human trafficking victim as defined by section 20M of chapter 233.

If a mandated reporter is a member of the staff of a medical or other public or private institution, school or facility, the mandated reporter may instead notify the person or designated agent in charge of such institution, school or facility who shall become responsible for notifying DCF in the manner required by this section.

A mandated reporter may, in addition to filing a report under this section, contact local law enforcement authorities or the child advocate about the suspected abuse or neglect. See School Committee Policy Manual for full description.

## **CLASSROOM VISITORS, VOLUNTEERS AND CHAPERONES**

If you wish to volunteer, help in the classroom or attend field trips you will need to have an approved CORI. CORI forms are available in the office. CORI checks may take up to 2 weeks to process. No unauthorized person will be permitted access to any classroom.

In addition, please adhere to the following:

- Parents must make prior arrangements with the teacher.
- All visitors/volunteers are to report to the main office first and receive a visitor sticker.
- No siblings will be allowed to accompany a parent volunteer to the classroom.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION UNDER 603 CMR 53:02(6) & 603 CMR 53.10**

Students may be suspended internally or externally. Internal/external suspension is assigned by administration. Suspension from school involves the temporary denial of a student's privilege to attend school and co-curricular activities, athletics, or school-sponsored functions the day of the internal/external suspension. Suspended students will be offered the opportunity to make up work and/or receive educational services during the period of removal. Students and staff will receive prior notification of internal/external dates. Externally suspended students are not allowed on any school grounds during their suspension. If students are externally suspended on the school day prior to the weekend or school break/vacation, the suspended student is not allowed to participate in extracurricular activities over the weekend or over school breaks/vacation, nor are they allowed on any school grounds.

When students are assigned an internal suspension, work will be supplied by staff. Students are expected to complete assignments. Student work is returned to the classroom teacher the afternoon of the internal suspension day. Students will follow all school rules. Students are not allowed to leave without supervision.

The school shall provide the student and parent/guardian with written and oral notice of the proposed out-of-school suspension, an opportunity to be heard at hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing. Notice shall be set forth in plain language as set forth by 603 CMR 53.02(6) under M.G.L. c.71, 37H3/4:

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

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

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

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

The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district, with regard to the suspension.

Reasons for internal/external suspensions include, but are not limited to:

- Repeating any combination of offenses from Category 1 and/or 2.
- Leaving school without parental permission/skipping school.
- Possession, use, under the influence of, and/or distribution of alcohol on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games.
- Possession, use, under the influence of, and/or distribution of non-prescription drugs or medications (see medication section).
- Possession of imitation weapons – which present an unreasonable risk of injury, fear, or significant disruption of the educational environment associated with the possession of imitation weapons.
- Exhibitionism, lewd, wanton and lascivious behavior, disorderly conduct and distracting and inappropriate sexual contact between students. Depending on its severity, such an offense may result in a long-term suspension and referral to law enforcement agencies (See Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 272, Sections 16 and 53).
- The possession, dissemination, or use of obscenity in any form, especially, speech, writing or explicit sexual pictures or drawings. The use of this language or material in an intentional, disrespectful and

disruptive manner will not be tolerated in a school setting, and may result in a long-term suspension and referral to law enforcement agencies (See Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 272, Sections 29 and 31).

- Intentional acts threatening the health and safety of self and/or others (i.e., fights, false fire alarms, extortion, engaging in serious unhealthy acts, etc.). A determination regarding the severity of such acts will be made by the appropriate administrator and staff member, and a long-term suspension and referral to law enforcement agencies may be recommended.
- Lack of respect for school staff and visitors, including, but not limited to, insubordination, disobedience to a teacher, administrator or staff member, the willful disregard of express or implied directions by a teacher, administrator or staff member and the use of insulting and/or profane language and gestures.
- Theft or vandalism of school property or the property of others in a school setting. Restitution by the offender is required. If the offense is judged particularly severe by the appropriate administrator, a long-term suspension and referral to law enforcement agencies may be recommended (See Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 266, Sections 30, 98, 100, 127A, etc.). Monetary damages may be pursued.
- Chronic school offender - The student who repeatedly disturbs or interrupts the educational process, refuses to work, who falsified signatures on reports, who refuses to return the signed papers to teachers or administrators, who refuses to report to appropriate school personnel, who exhibits offensive behaviors on a repeated or ongoing basis.
- Organizing or participating in “hazing” (See Hazing - Penalties, contained herein).
- Violation of Civil Rights - Students have the right to be free from discrimination based upon race, color, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, generation, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or handicap. Such discrimination includes, but is not limited to, verbal and physical attacks on students directed at their racial, ethnic or religious background, or their disability, and any form of sexual harassment.
- Violation of Federal or Massachusetts law.
- Any school-related act on or off school property which interferes or restricts another student’s ability to enjoy the educational benefits afforded or offered within the school setting. Such acts include, but are not limited to, incidents that interfere with or threaten the well being or order of the school or its staff, students, or the general public.
- Bullying (See Bullying Intervention Plan contained herein).

Reasons for Long-Term Suspension/Expulsion include but are not limited to:

- \* Chronic school offender - The student who repeatedly disturbs or interrupts the educational process, refuses to work, who falsified signatures on reports, who refuses to return the signed papers to teachers or administrators, who refuses to report to appropriate school personnel, who exhibits offensive behaviors on a repeated or ongoing basis.
- \* Possession of a firearm (See United States Code, section 921 of title 18), on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games;
- \* Possession of a dangerous weapon, other than a firearm (see Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 269, Section 10), on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games;

- \* Assault/Assault and Battery by means of a dangerous weapon (See Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 265, Sections 15A and 15B), on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games;
- \* Assault/Assault and Battery upon a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide, or other school staff member (See Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 265, Sections 13A and 13D), on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games;
- \* Possession, use and/or distribution of a controlled substance as defined in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 94C, including but not limited to marijuana, cocaine, crack and heroin, on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games;
- \* Serious offenses as defined in Grounds for Short-Term Suspension.
- \* Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37H 1/2, a student charged with a felony or the subject of a felony delinquency complaint may be suspended, or a student convicted, adjudicated, or admitting guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency may be expelled, provided that the principal determines, after hearing, that the student's continued presence poses a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Note: The due process procedures regarding long-term suspensions and/or expulsions for the offenses contained in M.G.L. c. 71, 37H3/4 are contained in this Handbook.

#### **SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION**

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

**Principal Hearing.** The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts for the principal's consideration in determining appropriate remedies and consequences for the student. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.

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

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

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

### **Due Process for Long-Term Suspensions:**

#### **LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION**

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

- i. 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;
- ii. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and or parent's/guardian's expense;
- iii. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
- iv. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- v. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request.

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

- i. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
- ii. Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
- iii. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;



- iv. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make academic progress during removal, and the contact information of a school member who can provide more detailed information.
- v. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or his/her designee (only if a long-term suspension has been imposed) within five (5) calendar days, which may be extended by parent/guardian request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

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

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

#### **APPEAL OF LONG-TERM SUSPENSION**

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent if properly and timely filed.

The student or parent/guardian 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 five (5) calendar days, the student or parent/guardian 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 his or discretion, for good cause.

The superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which the superintendent shall grant.

The superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian at the hearing. The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if she/he has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent/guardian and superintendent to participate. The superintendent shall send written notice to the parent/guardian of the date, time and location of the hearing.

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 and parent/guardian upon request.

The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension.

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 imposed by the principal's decision.

The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district, with regard to the suspension.

Any student expelled from school for such an offense shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

#### **Due Process for Suspensions: Emergency Removal**

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal.

During the emergency, removal the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The principal shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of a long-term suspension or short-term suspension to include the parent the opportunity to attend, as applicable, within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent/guardian.

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

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

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

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

The principal may use in-school suspension as an alternative to short-term suspension for disciplinary offenses.

A Principal may impose an in-school suspension as defined above according to the following procedures:

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

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction,

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

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

### **Suspension or Expulsion for Disciplinary Offenses under M.G.L. 71 §§37H And 37H½**

The due process notification and hearing requirements in the preceding sections do not apply to the following disciplinary offenses:

Possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or assault of staff

A student may be subject to expulsion if found in possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or the student assaults a member of educational staff, and the principal determines the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The Principal shall notify the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing of the opportunity for a hearing, and the right to have representation at the hearing, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses. After said hearing, a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to levy a suspension rather than expulsion. A student expelled for such an infraction shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten (10) days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at the hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student was guilty of the alleged offense.

### **Felony complaint or issuance of felony delinquency complaint**

Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony, or the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the Principal may suspend a student for a period of time determined appropriate by the Principal if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The Principal shall notify the student in writing of the charges, the reasons for the suspension (prior to such suspension taking effect), and the right to appeal. The Principal will also provide the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) the process for appealing the suspension to the Superintendent. The request for appeal must be made in writing within five (5) calendar days. The hearing shall be held within three (3) days of the request. The suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing before the Superintendent. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and the right to counsel. The

Superintendent has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

Felony conviction or adjudication/admission in court of guilt for a felony or felony delinquency

The Principal may expel a student convicted of a felony, or has an adjudication or admission of guilt regarding a felony, if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for the proposed expulsion. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent, as well as the appeal process. The expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent.

The student shall notify the Superintendent in writing of his/her request for an appeal the decision no later than five (5) calendar days following the date of the expulsion. The Superintendent hearing shall be held with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) within three (3) calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

Any student expelled from school for such an offense shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

### **Discipline of Students with Disabilities**

Students identified as having special needs:

**1. If a suspension is determined, the IEP team will be convened within 10 days of the decision to suspend to review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP; and**

**2. The parent/guardian will be provided written notice upon the decision to take disciplinary action**

3. All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in District Policy. Chapter 71B of the Mass. General Laws, formerly known as Chapter 766, requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation TEAM to have special needs and whose individualized program is described in an Individualized Educational Program (IEP).

a. If a student with special needs has violated the District's disciplinary code, the school may suspend or remove the student from his or her current educational placement for a period not to exceed ten (10) consecutive or cumulative school days in any school year as fully outlined under M.G.L. c. 71B, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Such suspensions may be carried out without any further or additional process.

b. Suspensions of students with special needs in excess of ten (10) consecutive days or ten (10) cumulative days may also occur, provided that the conduct for which the student is being disciplined is not a manifestation of his/her disability, and the District provides educational services which will allow the student to access the general curriculum and to make progress toward his/her goals, also known as Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

4. The IDEA and M.G.L. c. 71B allow school personnel to move a student with disabilities to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days, if that student is in possession of a dangerous weapon at school or a school function or on school property, is in possession or uses a controlled substance or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function or on school property, or inflicts serious bodily injury on a person, including him/herself. The appropriate interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the IEP TEAM.

5. The IDEA and M.G.L. c. 71B also allows school personnel the option of asking a hearing officer or a court to move children with special needs to an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 school days, if they are substantially likely to injure themselves or others in their current placement.

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1. When a special needs student has been suspended for more than ten (10) consecutive or cumulative days in a school year, such that a substantial change in placement is occurring or will occur, the IEP TEAM will meet to conduct a manifestation determination hearing. Relevant members of the TEAM meet for the manifestation determination hearing, and they answer two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:

a. Was the misconduct caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability/disabilities? OR

b. Was the misconduct the direct result of the District's/school's failure to implement the student's IEP?

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

2. If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student may be disciplined according to the suspension and expulsion policy. The student will receive educational services during this period of suspension. If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, then the school may still be able to implement an IAES (see ## 2 and 3 above). If the IAES is not possible, then the student will remain in his/her current placement, and the TEAM will arrange for a functional behavioral assessment (if one has not been conducted on the student) and the development or modification of a behavior intervention plan.

3. The Principal or designee will notify the Special Education Office of the suspendable offenses of a special needs student and a record will be kept of such notices.

#### **Student Conduct on School Buses- District Policy**

The School Committee and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing School Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal. To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee.

#### **DESTRUCTION OF STUDENT RECORDS**

#### **NOTICE OF DESTRUCTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, SECTION 504, & HEALTH RECORDS - District Policy**

Parents, guardians, and former students are hereby notified that all Special Education, Section 504, and Health records within the possession of the Palmer Public Schools will be destroyed, pursuant to 603 CMR 23.06, seven years from the date when the student is no longer eligible for Special Education or Section 504, graduates, moves or transfers to another district or completes his/her educational program at age 22 for Special Education. Eligible students, parents, or guardians may receive the student's Special Education, Section 504, or Health records prior to the destruction date by submitting a written request to the Principal.

See School Committee Policy Manual for full description.

## **DRUGS/ALCOHOL**

Being under the influence of controlled substances (including alcohol and/or non-prescribed drugs or inhalants) or the possessing of drugs or paraphernalia at school or at school sponsored activities is strictly prohibited.

Students who carry or use illegal drugs (including alcohol) and/or drug-related paraphernalia (including rolling papers) will be suspended for up to 10 school days and/or may be subject to expulsion. The student will be required to go home with his/her parent/guardian, and meet with the Principal or his/her designee for readmittance. The student will be required to meet with the guidance counselor for an appropriate follow-up. In addition, the student, parent/guardian, principal, and counselor may be required to meet in order to implement a rehabilitation program.

Any student who distributes or sells illegal drugs (including alcohol) will be suspended for up to 10 school days and/or may be subject to expulsion.

## **EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

All students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness, have equal access to the general education program and the full range of any occupational/vocational education programs offered by the district. To ensure that counseling and counseling materials are free from bias and stereotypes, all counselors encourage students to consider programs of study, courses, extracurricular activities and occupational opportunities on the basis of individual interests, abilities and skills; examine testing materials for bias and counteract any found bias when administering tests and interpreting test results; communicate effectively with limited-English-proficient and disabled students and facilitate their access to all programs and services offered by the district, including the opportunity to receive guidance and counseling in a language they understand; support students in educational and occupational pursuits that are nontraditional for their gender.

## **EMERGENCY LOCKDOWNS AND DRILLS**

### **Fire Drills**

A fire evacuation plan is posted in each room. Students should study the plan and become familiar with it. When the fire alarm sounds, the teacher will escort the students, in an orderly manner, to the nearest exit. Students with disabilities must be assisted out of the classroom; the elevator is not to be used during a fire drill.

### **Emergency Early Dismissal**

When an emergency early dismissal is in order, the Superintendent will notify local radio and television stations who will in turn alert families of the specifics regarding early dismissal. Parents should listen for early dismissal announcements as it is impossible for the school staff to make special arrangements to notify parents on an individual basis. We encourage parents to refrain from calling the school unless it is absolutely necessary.

Parents are advised to establish a plan of action for children to take in the event of an unanticipated emergency early dismissals as students may not be able to access school telephones.

## **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURES**

### **School Cancellations and Dismissals**

School cancellations announcements regarding no-school or modifications to the beginning and/or the end of the school day will be broadcast from television stations WGGB (Channel 40) and WWLP (Channel 22), Springfield, between the hours of 6:00 and 7:00 a.m. For families that have elected to receive Connect-Ed communications you will also receive school cancellations information this way.

Parents/guardians and students are asked to listen to one of the above stations between 6:00 and 7:00 a.m. for this announcement. Under no circumstances are the homes of the Superintendent or Principals to be called by parents or students, since it is necessary to keep those telephone lines clear for essential calls that must be made between the transportation company, principals, and other personnel.

### **Emergency Early Dismissal**

- In the case of an emergency dismissal, the Superintendent will notify local radio and television stations to alert parents to the specifics regarding the dismissal.
- Parents should listen for early dismissal announcements as it is impossible for the school staff to make special arrangements to notify parents on an individual basis.
- Parents are advised to have a plan in the event of emergency early dismissal as students may not be able to access school telephones.

We encourage parents to refrain from calling the school unless it is absolutely necessary.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Extracurricular activities sponsored by the district are nondiscriminatory in that:

- a. The school provides equal opportunity for all students to participate in intramural and interscholastic sports;
- b. Extracurricular activities or clubs sponsored by the school do not exclude students on the basis of race, sex, gender identity, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness.
- c. In the case of an external suspension students will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities up to and including graduation ceremony.

## **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 20 USC Section 1232 (g), affords parents/guardians and students upon reaching the age of 14 or upon entering ninth grade, whichever comes first, ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 10 calendar days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents/Guardians or eligible students should submit to the School Principal or appropriate school official a written request that identifies the record (s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2.The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading.

Parents/Guardians or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the School Principal or appropriate school official, clearly identifying the part of the record that they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or eligible student, The School will notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for the amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3.The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosures without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member, including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel, a person serving on the School Board/School Committee, a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist, or a parent/guardian or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another School official in performing his or her tasks.

A School official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

4.The right to file a complaint with the US Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is: Family Policy Compliance Office, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-4605.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Administration has the right to determine that a student will not be allowed to attend field trips based upon their behavioral and/or disciplinary record during the school year. In the event a student is not allowed to attend a field trip, the student will be provided with alternative instruction.

## **HAZING AND HARASSMENT OF OTHERS**

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 269, Sections 17-19 strictly prohibits any type of hazing or initiation into any student organization which will endanger, either physical or mental, a student’s person. The law specifically states:

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 three thousand dollars 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 eighteen and nineteen, 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 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 section.

Section 18: Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself 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 one thousand dollars.

#### PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS, SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY STATEMENT Student-To-Student Harassment 1414 Section 9528 PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Harassment is a major distraction from learning. The grades of the victims can suffer. Fear can lead to chronic absenteeism, truancy, or even dropping out of school. Bystanders feel both guilty and helpless for not standing up to the bully or harasser.

#### II. POLICY STATEMENT

Harassment of students by other students will not be tolerated in the Palmer Public Schools. This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, school district property or property within the jurisdiction of the school district, school buses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

#### III. EXCEPTIONS TO POLICY None

IV. AMPLIFYING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES Harassment prohibited by the district includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or disability. Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Harassment means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb or trouble students when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education or of a student's participation in school programs or activities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis for decisions affecting the student, or;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning environment.

### HEALTH SERVICES

#### Student Health and Wellness

Every effort is made to care for your child's physical, mental and emotional well-being while he/she is in school. Sick and injured children are given the best possible care, but the responsibility for treatment rests with the family.

#### Emergency Forms

Each school maintains an Emergency Information Form for each child. These are updated at the start of the school year. The form requests information such as the address, home telephone number of the child, plus the name, address, and telephone number of a friend or relative who would be willing to care for your child if you are not available. Under 'Remarks', you should indicate the hospital preferred. The information on this form is extremely important, and we request your cooperation in filling it out and returning it immediately. If your child has a handicap or a particular health condition, please furnish us with any pertinent information which

will enable us to make your child's adjustment to school a happy one. Finally, it is important to update this form should any of the information change during the course of the school year.

### Insurance

A student accident policy is available to all students at a nominal fee. Application forms are sent home at the beginning of the year. Please note: The school does not insure the students but only provides the opportunity as a help to parents. The decision to take out insurance is the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian.

### Wellness Policy

The Palmer Public Schools recognize the important relationship between wellness and academic success inclusive of the entire school community. The intent of this policy is to outline the district's ongoing commitment in support and promotion of wellness in the areas of nutrition, physical activity, and other school based activities.

### Food Allergies

The Palmer Public Schools recognize that food allergies can pose a life-threatening risk to certain students. In order to provide a safe environment for all students, we ask that you adhere to the following:

- A nut-free area will be provided in school as needed. Some foods may be prohibited from entering the classroom. Nut and nut products may not be used for art projects.

### Classroom Group Snacks

- All school snacks sent for class events must comply with the School Wellness Policy.
- Only store bought prepackaged food is allowed due to the possibility of allergic reaction.
- Parents will be provided with a list of suggested healthy snacks at the beginning of the school year.
- Food sent from home will only be allowed on designated days determined by the classroom teacher or school administration.
- Birthdays are acknowledged but are not celebrated with parties, special snacks or outside treats at school.

### Medication

The administration of medication within the schools must adhere to the School Committee Policy Administering Medications' Policy 6345, effective February 23, 2000. When the prescribed medication is to be given during school hours, the following procedure will be followed.

- Authorization for dispensing prescription medication in school must have a written order by the student's physician. Some short term prescription medications can be administered by directions on the pharmacy label.
- Written permission from the student's parent or guardian must be sent to the school. Forms for this purpose will be available in the principal or nurse's office.
- The medication must be delivered by a responsible adult to the school in an original pharmacy container labeled as to the name and strength of medication, dosage and time to be administered, name of the student and prescribing physician. If a medication is taken both at home and school, duplicate containers should be requested from the Pharmacy to avoid unnecessary round trip transportation.
- The medication will be kept in a locked area (or refrigerated if necessary).
- All medication will be administered by the school nurse

- Some medications, at the direction of the school nurse, may be self administered by the student at school. Prerequisites are: written approval for self administration by physician and parent/guardian, student demonstrates competency in self administration to school nurse. The school nurse will supervise these students.

### Immunizations

Students must be immunized according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Documentation from the physician must be provided to show proof of immunization for the student health record. Parents are responsible to keep these immunizations up to date. If your child receives any immunizations at the emergency room or at the doctor's office, please obtain a certificate at that time and forward to the nurse so the Health Record can be updated.

Physicals are required for all students entering the Palmer Schools (within one year prior to entrance to school or within 30 days after school entry and at intervals of 3-4 years thereafter). It is preferred that the examination be done by your child's physician who is more aware of your child's health history. If a private physical examination is not submitted, the school physician will examine your child, usually the first two weeks of school (unless other arrangements are made with the nurse). Physical exam forms are sent home with all new students and grade 6 students. Parents are urged to have dental exams on the child annually.

### **HOMEWORK**

The term "homework" refers to an assignment to be prepared during a period of supervised study in class or outside of class.

The purposes of homework are to improve the learning processes, to aid in the mastery of skills, and to create and stimulate interest on the part of the student.

Homework is a learning activity which should increase in complexity with the maturity of the student. With increased maturity, learning should become an independent activity. This should be established through consistent assignments which encourage students to investigate for themselves and to work independently as well as with others.

Homework assignments should be consistent in terms of the amount given each day and the time required for each assignment so that a pattern of meaningful homework can be established by the teacher and/or the student.

The information for any homework assignment should be clear and specific so that the student can complete the assignment.

Homework assignments should take into consideration individual differences of students such as health, ability, conditions at home, and educational resources at home. Homework should not require the use of reference materials not readily available in most homes, school libraries, or the public library, and should require the use of those materials only when the student has had instruction in the use of them.

There are many other learning activities in the life of a student besides homework. Such things as participating in school activities, pursuing cultural interests, participating in family living, and exploring personal interests should be considered by teachers when planning consistent assignments. Homework is not to be used as a form of punishment under any circumstances.

### **PHOTOGRAPHING & VIDEOTAPING OF STUDENTS**

Refer to annual Student Information Sheet

As much as possible, publishers are encouraged to include student pictures and work. As the District represents itself to the world through this medium, assurances should be provided that students are the focus of the Palmer Public School District. Written student and parent consent must be secured for publication of student work.

## **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS**

In accordance with Federal and State laws and specific state regulations, Section 603 CMR 46.00 all school districts in Massachusetts are mandated to adopt the state's new restraint regulations and develop policies and procedures regarding restraints.

Physical restraint is defined as the use of bodily force to limit a student's freedom of movement. A restraint occurs when a student is immobilized or has a reduction in the ability to move their torso, arms, and legs or head freely. Physical restraint shall only be considered an emergency procedure of last resort when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to the student or others and when the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate to keep a student and all other members of the school community safe. In the event that physical restraint is required to protect the safety of the student and school community members, the Palmer Public Schools has enacted the following policy and procedures to ensure the proper use of restraint and to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of restraint. These procedures shall be annually reviewed, provided to school staff, and made available to parents of enrolled students. None of the foregoing paragraphs or the policy/ procedures which follow, precludes any teacher, employee or agent of the Palmer Public Schools from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious harm.

### **1. Staff Training**

A. All staff/faculty receive training regarding the school's restraint policy within the first month of each school year, and employees hired after the school year begins will receive training within one month of starting their employment.

B. Required training for all staff will include a review of the following:

- (1) The role of the student, family, and staff in preventing restraint;
- (2) The District's restraint policy;
- (3) The staff is expected to make every effort to prevent the need for the use of restraint and only use restraint as an emergency procedure of last resort;
- (4) Interventions which may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances;
- (5) When behavior presents an emergency that requires physical restraint, the types of permitted physical restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used, in particular a restraint of extended duration
- (6) Physical escort shall mean a temporary touching or holding without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location. Physical escort is not physical restraint.
- (7) Administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student. School nurses are responsible for providing monthly updated lists to the principal and the Director of Special Services of students with known medical and psychological limitations.

(8) Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training (as set forth below in section C) in the use of physical restraint.

C. Designated staff members shall participate in at least sixteen hours of in-depth training in the use of physical restraint.

(1) At the beginning of the school year, the principal will identify those staff who will participate in in-depth training and who will then be authorized to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.

In-depth training will include:

- a. Appropriate procedures for preventing the use of physical restraint, including the de-escalation of dangerous behavior, relationship building, and the use of alternatives to restraint;
- b. A description and identification of specific dangerous behaviors on the part of a student that may lead to the use of physical restraint and methods for evaluating the risk of harm in individual situations in order to determine whether the use of restraint is warranted;
- c. The simulated experience of administering and receiving physical restraint, instruction regarding the effect(s) on the person restrained, including instruction on monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance;
- d. Instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injuries and complaints;
- e. Demonstration by participants of proficiency in administering physical restraint; and
- f. Instruction regarding the impact of physical restraint on the student and family, recognizing the act of restraint has impact, including but not limited to psychological, physiological, and social-emotional effects.

## 2. Proper Administration of Physical Restraint

A. Physical restraint may only be used as a last resort, in the following circumstances: The student actions poses a threat of imminent, serious, harm to self and/or others.

B. Physical restraint is prohibited in the following circumstances:

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

C. Only public education program personnel who have received required training or in-depth training pursuant to this policy shall administer physical restraint on students with, whenever possible, one adult witness who does not participate in the restraint. The training requirements, however, shall not preclude a teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

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

E. A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation.

F. Physical restraint shall be discontinued when it is determined that the student is no longer at risk or causing imminent physical harm to self or others.

G. Additional safety requirements:

(1) A restrained student shall not be prevented from breathing or speaking. A staff member will continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color and respiration, during the restraint.

(2) If at any time during a physical restraint the student demonstrates significant physical distress, as determined by the staff member, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.

(3) Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.

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

(1) review the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint;

(2) review the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed; and

(3) consider whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident;

(4) review the incident and student behavior with the special education coordinator.

3. Reporting requirements:

A. Program staff shall report the use of all physical restraints.

B. The staff member who administered such a restraint shall verbally inform the principal of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report no later than the next school working day.

(1) The written report shall be provided to the Principal for review of the use of the restraint. If the principal has administered the restraint, the principal shall prepare the report and submit it to an individual or team designated by the superintendent or board of trustees for review.

(2) The principal shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the Department or the student's parent, upon request.

(3) Copies of all restraint reports will be forwarded to Special Services Office within 48 hours of restraint.

C. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student's parent(s)/ guardian(s) of such restraint within 24 hours of the event and shall notify the parent by written report sent either within three (3) school working days of the restraint to an email address provided by the parent for communications about the student, or by regular mail postmarked no later than three (3) school working days of the restraint.

NOTE: If the school customarily provides school related information to the parent(s)/ guardian(s) in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided in that language.

The written report required by both sections B and C above shall include:

(1) Names and job titles of the staff who administered the restraint, and observers, if any;

(2) Date of restraint and time restraint began and ended;

(3) Name of administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint;

(4) Date and time student's parent(s)/guardian(s) was verbally contacted and informed of the use of physical restraint;

- (5) Description of the activity the student, other students, and staff in the area were engaged in immediately preceding the use of physical restraint;
- (6) Student's behavior/actions that prompted the restraint;
- (7) Efforts made to prevent escalation of behavior, including the specific de-escalation strategies used; alternatives to restraint that were attempted;
- (8) Justification for initiating physical restraint;
- (9) Description of administration of restraint, including:
  - a. The hold used and reasons such hold were necessary
  - b. The student's behavior and reactions during the restraint
  - c. How the restraint ended and
  - d. Documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided
- (10) Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including consequences that may be imposed on the student; and
- (11) Information regarding opportunities for the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any consequences that may be imposed on the student and other related matters.

D. The District will, within five school working days of the reported restraint, provide to the Department of Education a copy of the written report as described above and a copy of the record of all physical restraints maintained by the program administrator for the thirty-day period prior to the date of the reported.

4. Individual student review. The principal shall conduct a weekly review of restraint data to identify students who have been restrained multiple times during the week. If such students are identified, the principal shall convene one or more review teams, as the principal deems appropriate, to assess each student's progress and needs. The assessment shall include at least the following:

- (a) Review and discussion of the written reports submitted in accordance with 603 CMR 46.06 and any comments provided by the student and parent about such reports and the use of the restraints;
- (b) An analysis of the circumstances leading up to each restraint, including factors such as time of day, day of the week, antecedent events, and individuals involved;
- (c) Consideration of factors that may have contributed to the escalation of behaviors, consideration of alternatives to restraint, including de-escalation techniques and possible interventions, and such other strategies and decisions as appropriate, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of restraint in the future;
- (d) An agreement on a written plan of action by the program.

If the principal directly participated in the restraint, a duly qualified individual designated by the Superintendent or School Committee shall lead the review team's discussion. The principal shall ensure that a record of each individual student review is maintained and made available for review by the Department or the parent, upon request.

5. Administrative review. The principal shall conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data. This review shall consider patterns of use of restraints by similarities in the time of day, day of the week, or individuals involved; the number and duration of physical restraints school-wide and for individual students; the duration of restraints; and the number and type of injuries, if any, resulting from the use of restraint. The principal shall determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify the school's restraint prevention and management policy, conduct additional staff training on restraint reduction or prevention strategies, such as

training on positive behavioral interventions and supports, or take such other action as necessary or appropriate to reduce or eliminate restraints.

6. Report all restraint-related injuries to the Department. When a physical restraint has resulted in an injury to a student or program staff member, the program shall send a copy of the written report required by the Department postmarked no later than three (3) school working days of the administration of the restraint. The program shall also send the Department a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the program for the 30-day period prior to the date of the reported restraint. The Department shall determine if additional action by the program is warranted and, if so, shall notify the program of any required actions within 30 calendar days of receipt of the required written report(s).

7. Report all physical restraints to the Department. Every program shall collect and annually report data to the Department regarding the use of physical restraints. Such data shall be reported in a manner and form directed by the Department.

#### 8. Grievance Procedures

A. Parents will notify the principal or the designee of any concerns regarding restraint practices and procedure. If a designee receives the complaint or a concern that designee shall notify principal within the school day. The principal shall notify the Superintendent within twenty-four hours of receiving a concern. The Superintendent or School Committee shall at his/her or its discretion order an investigation.

### **SCHOOL/COACHING VOLUNTEERS**

It is the policy of the School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the schools. All prospective volunteers must notify the building Principal of their desire to volunteer in addition to completing a CORI Form. If the Principal deems the request to be satisfactory, the CORI will be checked by the Superintendent. The Superintendent or his/her designee will then notify the building Principal if the volunteer has been approved.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer be approved without a CORI. In no instance will the Principal of Palmer High School, the Director of Athletics, nor the Head Coach of any sport allow a prospective volunteer to participate in any coaching duties until the Superintendent has approved the appointment of the individual to be a volunteer coach. The Superintendent's decision is final. Under no circumstances will a volunteer be paid. All volunteers must sign the bottom of this policy stating they've read and understand the policy. Volunteer coaches must comply with existing policies of the Palmer School Committee and procedures of the Palmer Public Schools.

Specific to Volunteer Coaches: Head Coaches, who are requesting the services of a volunteer coach, must submit a letter to the Director of Athletics requesting the appointment of the volunteer coach. The request must be submitted to and reviewed by the Director of Athletics and the Principal of Palmer High School who will forward it to the Superintendent of Schools.

Members of the salaried coaching staff who are appointed by the Superintendent of Schools are fully responsible for all aspects of their respective sport at all levels. At no time will a volunteer coach be



empowered to discipline an athlete. Volunteers will not be left in the presence of athletes without a Head or Assistant Coach present.

## **SECTION 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any programs and activities which receive federal financial assistance. Educationally, Section 504 guarantees certain rights to students with disabilities, including the right to full participation and access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) regardless of the nature or severity of the disability.

Section 504 requires school districts to provide students with disabilities the same opportunity to succeed in school as is provided to students without disabilities. For this to occur, programs must be accessible for students with disabilities by providing reasonable adaptations, accommodations and/or modifications for instructional purposes.

For a student to be eligible under section 504 he/she must have the presence of a documented physical or mental impairment and the disabling impairment must result in substantial limitation of major life activities. Some examples of major life activities include self-care, walking, communicating, seeing, hearing, breathing, etc. A diagnosis of a disability does not automatically qualify a student for eligibility under Section 504. School teams and parents who feel a student may meet the criteria for Section 504 eligibility may request a 504 evaluation of the student. Eligibility is determined by:

- An evaluation in which appropriate information is gathered (such as student records, observations, anecdotal reports, teacher reports, individual and group tests, aptitude and achievement tests, medical information, nursing/OT/PT/SLP assessments, emergency care plans, and behavior assessment);
- Input referenced from written documentation from medical, psychological, or outside agency reports;

This will provide the team with enough information to determine that the disability substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Students who meet the eligibility guidelines for Section 504 will have a 504 plan developed for use in the general education classroom. The plan will specify the disability, major life activities affected by the disability, and necessary accommodations specific to the student. The 504 Team will review each student's 504 plan on a yearly basis to ensure its effectiveness, yet parents or school staff may request the plan be reviewed and/or revised at any time as needed.

Any questions or concerns regarding Section 504 should be forwarded to the Assistant Principal at your school.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS**

To create for all Palmer Public School students a study environment free of sexual harassment.

The Palmer Public Schools is committed to safeguarding the right of all persons associated with the Palmer Public Schools, including students, employees, school committee members and volunteers to a work and educational environment that is free from all forms of sexual harassment. Therefore, the Palmer Public Schools condemns and prohibits all sexual harassment on its premises.

All individuals associated with the school system, but not necessarily limited to the School Committee, the administration, the staff, students and members of the public while on campus, are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. Any person who engages

in sexual harassment while acting as a member of the school community or while on school property will be in violation of this policy.

- Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, will be taken in any instance where an employee violates this policy.
- Sexual harassment by a student will result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Sexual harassment by others will result in their being excluded from School premises or if it is required that they enter the premises, they will be accompanied by a school system representative at all times.

#### Sexual Harassment Definition

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

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

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Assault, inappropriate touching, intentionally impeding movement, comments, gestures, or written communications of a suggestive or derogatory nature.
- Continuing to express sexual interest after being informed that the interest is unwelcome. (The reciprocal attraction between peers is not considered sexual harassment)
- Implying or actually withholding grades earned or deserved, suggesting that a poor performance evaluation will be prepared, or suggesting that a scholarship recommendation or college application will be denied.
- Coercive sexual behavior used to control, influence or affect the educational opportunities, grades and/or the learning environment of a student.
- Offering or granting favors or educational benefits, such as grades or recommendations, in exchange for sexual favors.
- Other sexual harassing behavior directed towards students, whether committed by management, staff, or students, is also prohibited.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances or proposition
- Sexually explicit language or gestures
- Touching that an individual interprets as sexual in nature
- Any unwelcome physical contact

- The presence of sexually provocative photographs, pictures or other material, and the telling of sexual stories or jokes
- Verbal or nonverbal behavior about an individual's body that is interpreted as sexual in nature.

If the sexual harassment is criminal in nature, the offense shall be reported to the police department as well as the Title IX Coordinator.

If the sexual harassment requires the intervention of state social service or protective agencies (DCF), the proper authorities will be contacted. In these circumstances, the School's attorney will be immediately contacted to give advice and guidance on how to process these actions with the appropriate authorities.

Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should

- Make a complaint to any administrator, the Title IX Coordinator, or directly to the Superintendent, so that appropriate action may be taken at once.

Management representatives are charged with the responsibility of discouraging any sexually harassing behaviors within or outside of their areas of supervision. This includes directly confronting the harasser when a management representative observes harassing behavior, and immediately reporting the activity to the Title IX Coordinator.

#### Complaint Procedure

##### *Informal Process for Students*

In determining whether an alleged incident constitutes sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all sexual harassment complaints in accordance with the procedure outlined below, unless the Title IX Coordinator is the subject of the complaint.

Any student of the school system who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment is to report the incident(s) to any administrator, Title IX Coordinator, or directly to the Superintendent. The administrator and/or Superintendent are to immediately contact the Title IX Coordinator. A written record of the complaint will be made by the party receiving the complaint. A separate file system will be **maintained**, apart from the student's personal record, regarding these complaints and as to all matters relating to the complaints.

- If the alleged harassment involves the Title IX Coordinator, the Superintendent of Schools will act as the Title IX Coordinator.
- If the alleged harassment involves the Superintendent of Schools, the Secretary of the School Committee will act as the Title IX Coordinator.
- The Superintendent and the Title IX Coordinator will look at the totality of the circumstances and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. They will attempt to resolve the problem by conferring with both parties in order to obtain a clear understanding of the facts. All matters involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Students may be accompanied, at any phase of this process or subsequent hearing before the Committee, by a parent, guardian or representative of their choosing. Parents will be immediately notified by the Title IX Coordinator of the existence of a student's report of sexual harassment.

The Title IX Coordinator will explain each phase of the Informal and Formal Complaint Process to a student who wishes to file a complaint and will assist the student in the processing of the complaint. In addition, the Title IX Coordinator will inform the student of additional forums for resolution of the complaint, such as the Office of Civil Rights (O.C.R.) and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (M.C.A.D.).

Under normal circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator's investigation will be completed within five working days of the initial complaint. Upon completion of the investigation, the Title IX Coordinator shall issue his/her findings in writing to the student and the alleged harasser.

#### Formal Process for Students

A complainant may file a formal complaint immediately or may do so after the Superintendent and the Title IX Coordinator's efforts to reach a settlement under the informal process have proven unsuccessful.

The complaint will state clearly and concisely the complainant's description of the incident and it will also indicate any remedy sought. The complaint must be signed by the complainant. The Superintendent's office will send the respondent a copy of the complaint within five working days after it is received. A separate file system shall be maintained as to all matters relating to the complaint. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent possible.

The respondent will have ten working days to respond in writing. This statement will contain full and specific references to each claim in the complaint, admitting, denying or explaining the complainant's allegations. The respondent must sign his or her statement which will then be appended to the original complaint. Within three working days, the Superintendent's office will forward both statements to the complainant and the respondent.

There will be two modes of resolution for formal complaints. A complaint may be settled through mediation or through a hearing. If the complainant and respondent agree to pursue mediation, a date mutually acceptable to both parties will be set within ten working days. If the mediation results in a mutually acceptable agreement, copies of the agreement will be forwarded to both parties. If the mediation does not result in an agreement, the case will be forwarded to the Superintendent for a hearing unless the Superintendent is the alleged harasser in which case the hearing will be before the Palmer Public Schools School Committee.

When a hearing is requested, the Title IX Coordinator will inform the Superintendent or the School Committee, as the case may be, and the case will be heard at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the School Committee pursuant to the provisions of the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law and/or before the Superintendent pursuant to M.G.L., c. 71, § 42.

#### Formal Hearing

The presiding officer of the hearing may have counsel present for purposes of assisting in the orderly conduct of the hearing and the questioning of witnesses. The complainant and the respondent will be asked to clarify the issues and to define the areas of disagreement. To encourage a fair and focused hearing, at the start of the

proceedings the points of agreement and disagreement will be reviewed. The Superintendent or the Committee, as the case may be, will hear testimony and consider whether the School Committee Policy on Sexual Harassment has been violated, and, if so, will recommend appropriate consequences.

The presiding officer will:

- Ensure an orderly presentation of all evidence;
- Ensure that the proceedings are accurately recorded by means of a tape or stenographic recording; and
- See that a decision is issued no later than ten working days after the conclusion of the hearing or, when written arguments are submitted, ten working days after their submission.
- The Superintendent or the Committee, as the case may be, will:
- Conduct a fair and impartial hearing which ensures the rights of all parties involved;

Define issues of contention;

- Receive and consider all relevant evidence which reasonable people customarily rely upon in the conduct of serious business;
- Ask relevant questions of the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses if needed to elicit information which may be of assistance in making a decision; and
- Ensure that the complainant and respondent have full opportunity to present their claims orally or in writing and to present witnesses and evidence which may establish their claims.

Decision of The Superintendent or The Committee

- After all the evidence, testimony, and written arguments have been presented, the committee will convene for deliberations to determine whether the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been violated. If the Committee finds after a roll call vote that the policy has not been violated, that fact will be registered in the records of the hearing, and the written decision will be forwarded to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after completion of the hearing.
- In hearings before the Superintendent, if the Superintendent finds that the policy has not been violated, the Superintendent will issue a written decision to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after the completion of the hearing.
- If the Committee finds after a roll call vote that the charge of violating the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been substantiated, the hearing Committee will prepare findings and will determine a penalty for the respondent and relief for the complainant. The Committee will issue such a decision to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after the completion of the hearing.
- In hearings before the Superintendent, if the Superintendent finds that the charge of violating the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been substantiated, the Superintendent will prepare findings and will determine a penalty for the respondent and relief for the complainant. The Superintendent will issue such a decision to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after the completion of the hearing.

The findings of fact as well as the penalty and relief will be based solely on the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing.

The penalty should reflect the severity of the harassment. The penalties may include, but will not be limited to, anyone or combination of the following: verbal admonition, written warning placed in the respondent's personnel file or student record, probation, suspension without pay, dismissal, demotion, or removal from administrative duties within a department; students may be subject to suspension or expulsion proceedings following a finding that the policy has been violated. The Committee or Superintendent may also make appropriate recommendations, such as professional counseling, and may recommend relief for the complainant which reinstates and restores, as much as possible, the aggrieved party.

The Title IX Coordinator will investigate complaints promptly, and corrective action will be taken where appropriate. No person will suffer retaliation or intimidation as a result of using the internal complaint procedure. A copy of this policy and its accompanying regulations are posted in appropriate places, and made available to individuals upon request.

The Title IX Coordinators for the Palmer Public Schools is the Director of Student Services and Special Education, the Superintendent and the Business Manager.

#### Legal References:

Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act 1964 as amended  
45 Federal Regulations 746776 issued by Chapter 622JEEOC  
Title IX of 1972 Education Amendments

- Harassment as described above may include, but is not limited to:
- Verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, or other school matter.
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student.

Retaliation against a student because a student has filed a harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding is also prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

#### V. Delegation of Authority

The district will prompt and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment. The Principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment. A student statement form is available in the main office, guidance office, or nurse's office.

The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy. VI. LEGAL CITATIONS

Massachusetts General Laws, Section 151B,3A

Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended

Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

References: "Words that Hurt", American School Board Journal,  
September 1999 National Education Policy Network, NSBA

#### **SMOKING/TOBACCO USE/POSSESSION ON SCHOOL PREMISES**

Use/Possession of any tobacco product including, but not limited to, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, chewing tobacco, cigars or pipes within school buildings, school facilities, school grounds, school busses, at school sponsored

events and sporting events or in personal vehicles on school property is strictly prohibited. This policy applies to all students, school staff, school personnel, volunteers and any visitors.

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

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

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Special education refers to specially designed instructional services beyond the general classroom program. It is for children with disabilities in one or a combination of any of the following areas: health, physical, developmental, sensory, intellectual, neurological, emotional, communication, or specific learning issues which impact their ability to make effective progress in school. Services may include classroom modifications, physical/occupational/speech therapy, or placement in a specialized program.

Prior to a student being referred for a special education evaluation, it is the school district's responsibility to ensure a variety of instructional supports and/or classroom accommodations have been attempted within the general education setting (MTSS). Documentation of the use of instructional supports and/or accommodations must be made part of the student's record.

A parent/guardian, teacher, or other professional may refer a student for an evaluation through special education. When a student is referred for a special education evaluation, written consent from the parent/guardian must be obtained prior to beginning the evaluation process period. The evaluation must be sufficiently comprehensive to assist in identifying all of the student's possible special education and related service needs. The type of evaluation tools and professionals, evaluating each student depends on each student's individual needs.

After all evaluations are completed, the Team (consisting of parents/guardians, evaluators, teachers, a Team Chair, and any other necessary school staff) will convene to determine whether the lack of progress is the result of a disability and whether the student requires specially designed instruction in order to make progress and access the general education curriculum. The team may find the student eligible for special education services or may make a finding of no eligibility. If the student is found not eligible, the Team may explore other programs and/or supports within the school that are available to the student.

If a student is determined to be eligible for special education services, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP is a legal document which defines individualized objectives for a student found to have a disability as defined by federal regulations. The IEP must be tailored to the individual student's needs and will drive the student's placement. Once the IEP is written, the parent/guardian must sign consent for the proposed services to begin.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS**

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

The Palmer Public Schools reaffirms that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, religion or sexual orientation or exercise of civil rights in admission to, access to, treatment in or employment in its programs or activities. The Palmer Public Schools also affirms its commitment to maintain a school and work environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

Orientation, or exercise of civil rights will not be tolerated. If you should have a complaint or concern that there has been discrimination, you may also utilize the following procedure:

- Report the violation to the building principal.
- The building principal will meet with you and other persons who might have information about the issue promptly and will attempt to resolve the issue.
- Any additional investigation will be commenced within a reasonable period of time.
- The building principal will issue his/her decision in writing to you within ten (10) days of the conclusion of the investigation.
- If the complaint is not resolved, it can then be appealed to the school system's Equal Opportunity/Title IX/Section 504/ADA Coordinator. This appeal must be in writing, describe the circumstances, 'and the relief you seek.
- This appeal should be taken within one week after receipt of the principal's decision.
- The Equal Opportunity/Title IX/Section 504/ADA Coordinator will meet with you within a reasonable time. Following a review of the materials presented to the principal and any additional investigation, which will be conducted promptly, the Coordinator will make a final determination on whether there has been a violation of the district's policy within ten (10) days after the conclusion of any additional investigation.
- If there has been a violation, the Coordinator will indicate the steps to be taken to correct it.

Inquiries concerning the application of nondiscrimination policies may also be referred to the Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, T. W. McCormack POCH, Room 222, Boston, MA 02109-4557.

*The school system's Equal Opportunity/Title IX/Section 504/A.D.A. Coordinator is the Director of Student Services and Special Education.*

#### **STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A DISABILITY AND PROVIDED WITH A SECTION 504 PLAN**

1. Students are expected to meet the expectations for behavior identified in District Policy. A student on a Section 504 plan may be disciplined like any other non-disabled student. However, if the student is going to be suspended for ten (10) or more consecutive days, expelled, or suspended for more than ten (10) cumulative days (and there is a change in placement as a result), then a manifestation determination hearing shall be convened. The 504 team shall convene, and answer two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:

1. Was the misconduct caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability/disabilities? OR
2. Was the misconduct the direct result of the District's/school's failure to implement the student's Section 504 Plan?

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



2. If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student may be disciplined according to the discipline policy in this handbook. Upon returning from his/her suspension/expulsion, the TEAM will arrange for a functional behavioral assessment (if one has not been conducted on the student) and the development or modification of a behavior intervention plan.

3. The Principal (or designee) will notify the Student Support Services Office of the suspendable offenses of Section 504 students and a record will be kept of such notices.

### **STUDENT NOT YET IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A DISABILITY**

Students not yet identified to be eligible for special education or 504 services: The law applies to general education students if the District/school had knowledge prior to the misconduct that the student was disabled. Under the law, a school district is presumed to have "had knowledge" that a general education student was disabled if the student's:

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) has "expressed concern in writing" to the District/school that the student is in need of special education and/or related services;

2. Parent/guardian(s) have requested a special education and/or a Section 504 evaluation of the child, or

3. District staff have "expressed concern" directly to the Director of Special Education, Section 504 Coordinator, or other supervisory personnel specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student. If there was no knowledge, the parent/guardian(s) may request an expedited evaluation. During this period, the student may be suspended or expelled under normal District Policy, Suspension and Expulsion (File: J42). Students identified to have a disability must receive appropriate educational services.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **Safety and Transportation**

Alerting children to the need for being "safety conscious" at all times is a never-ending responsibility. Children should learn the need for rules and recognize the importance of obeying them. The following are suggested safety guidelines to be shared with your child:

#### **A. Walking**

1. Walk on sidewalks when they are available. If there are no sidewalks, child should walk facing the oncoming traffic.

2. Walk in an orderly manner, keeping alert to any dangers.

3. Come directly to school and go directly home.

4. Look in all directions before crossing any street.

5. Cross streets at proper corners and where crossing guards are stationed.

6. Respect all public and private property, keeping off lawns, not cutting through backyards, etc.

7. Walking pupils are to be discouraged from arriving on the school grounds prior to 10 minutes before the bell

#### **B. Bussing**

1. Stay out of the street while waiting for the bus.

2. Refrain from pushing or otherwise endangering yourself and friends while waiting at the bus stop.

3. Wait until the bus comes to a full stop before going near it.

4. Take a seat in the bus and remain orderly while the bus is in motion.

5. Keep head, arms, and hands inside the bus windows.

Bus pupils are assigned to a specific bus. Since bus loads are carefully planned, it is difficult to honor requests for a pupil to take a bus other than the one to which he/she is assigned.

**The specific rules concerning the riding of school busses are as follows:**

1. Only those high school students who act as tutors to our elementary school children following the regular high school day are permitted to ride an elementary school bus to their home. This can be done only by specific written approval by the Superintendent for this purpose.
2. Middle and high school students other than those indicated above may not ride elementary school busses at any time.
3. Children who normally walk to school may not ride a bus at any time.
4. ALL students must be picked up or dropped off at the same location each day. Morning and afternoon stops may not be the same. However, the location must remain a constant Monday through Friday. If a change in location is needed, a note must be sent to the principal. Changes will be approved only for emergencies. This procedure will enable the transportation process to run more efficiently and safely.
5. Designated bus students must ride the bus to and from school at all times. They cannot walk when they so choose.

There are both space and legal reasons for the above, so we would ask all parents or guardians to cooperate so that we may continue to have a safe bus transportation setup and so that both parents and staff can feel that the legal requirements for safety are being followed. Special arrangements can be made for emergency situations with permission slips from parents.

**WARNING TICKET SYSTEM**

1 <sup>st</sup> ticket	Warning
2 <sup>nd</sup> ticket	3 day suspension
3 <sup>rd</sup> ticket	5 day suspension
4 <sup>th</sup> ticket	Indefinite suspension

- A student's bus privileges may be suspended indefinitely without using the above system (profanity, vandalism, fighting, etc.).
- If a ticket is issued in the morning the student must: Have the principal sign the ticket; show the signed ticket to the bus driver in the afternoon; have parent sign ticket; return ticket to the bus driver the next morning.
- If a ticket is issued in the afternoon the student must: Have a parent or guardian sign the ticket; show the signed ticket to the driver the following morning; have the principal sign the ticket; return the ticket to the driver that afternoon.
- Administrative signature on a bus ticket denotes an acknowledgement that a bus ticket has been issued by the bus company.

The student WILL NOT be allowed to ride the bus if:

- The ticket has not been signed
- The student refuses the ticket
- The student loses or destroys the ticket

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## Important Phone Numbers

Superintendent's Office - 413- 283-2650

Special Education Office - 413-283-2651

Old Mill Pond School - 413-283-4300

OMP - FAX - 413-283-2619

## School Cancellation Announcements

Information concerning cancellation, delayed opening of school on bad weather days, or evacuation will be provided via the following:

**Television:** Channels 40 (WGGB) and 22 (WWLP)

**Website:** [www.palmerschools.org](http://www.palmerschools.org)

This information will also be shared through **ONE CALL NOW**, the telephone rapid notification and communication service for families that have elected to receive them. The phone numbers on file through Rediker provided by families at the start of school will be the main number used in the One Call Now program. If your phone number changes during the year, please notify us immediately. If students are already at school, and it is necessary to dismiss before standard school hours, you will be notified through the TV channels, the district website, and if necessary, One Call Now.

Parents, please make certain your child knows what to do or where to go from school in case we need to close school early due to bad weather or emergency evacuation.

## Daily Schedule Information

### OLD MILL POND SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS

The OMP School Office is open from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm. During the day, all calls go directly to the office. Calls may go directly to teachers before 8:30 am and after 3:00 pm.

### Lunch/ Recess Schedule

10:45-11:15 Kindergarten Recess 12:30-1:00 Lunch

11:15-12:00 Grade 1 Lunch and Recess

12:00-12:45 Grade 2 Lunch and Recess

11:35- 12:20 Grade 3 Lunch and Recess

10:55-11:40 Grade 4 Lunch and Recess

12:20- 1:05 Grade 5 Lunch and Recess

### Preschool Schedule

AM Session --9:15-11:30

PM Session—12:30-2:41

## Getting To and From School

All students are provided bus transportation to and from school or parents may utilize the car line through the PIK My KID app on a cell phone or electronic device.

### AM AND PM CAR LINE

#### **Morning Drop-off/Car Line**

- Students should not be dropped off before 8:35 a.m.
- Morning drop off will use a CAR LINE SYSTEM
  - ALL CARS will stay in the car line and circle behind the school to the back entrance
  - Staff will open the door of your car to let your students out and to greet them
  - Please have your child(ren) in the back seat on the driver's side for easy door opening
  - PARENTS PLEASE STAY IN THE CAR AT ALL TIMES - staff will help your children get out of the car and into the building - this increases the speed and safety of the car line
  - 3-5 cars will be emptied at a time.
  - Please wait for a signal from a staff member before pulling away or pulling up to the door
- Parents- please recognize that the front entrance is only for bus drop off of students

#### **Late Arrivals**

- Students who arrive after 8:45 a.m. will be marked as tardy.
- Students who are late should come directly to the office with an adult to sign in.
- Students will receive a chip which they must give to their teacher.

#### **Afternoon Pick-Up**

- Students will be available for pick-up at 2:40 each day.
- Afternoon pick-up will use a Car Line System
  - Cars will form the car line and circle behind the school to the back entrance to the gym
  - Staff will open the back door for your child
  - For safety please remain in your car at all times- Family Dismissal Numbers will be asked for as you get closer to the gym door.
  - Staff will help your children get into your car - this increases the speed and safety of the car line
  - 4-6 cars will be loaded at a time.
  - Please wait for a signal from a staff member before pulling away or pulling up to the door
  - The rear entrance will be used at both times of the day for dropping off students.
- If your child typically takes the bus, a note must be provided for your child to be picked-up. In the event you are unable to send a note or decide to pick your child up after school begins, the office must be notified no later than 2:00 p.m. of your intent to pick-up your child.

#### **Early Dismissal**

In the interest of student safety, parents who plan to release their child to another person at dismissal time please send a note to the office that identifies the adult to whom the child will be released and make sure the adult knows your **FAMILY DISMISSAL NUMBER**. Old Mill Pond School **CANNOT** release any student to a person unless they are on the student's emergency card or named in a parental note and have a the FAMILY DISMISSAL NUMBER. See Dismissal number instructions below.

**Early Dismissal by Parent** - It is important to remember that our teachers are teaching and our students are learning right up until dismissal at 2:41. Please make every effort to avoid dismissals during the school day. Your efforts to schedule doctor's appointments, etc. before or after school will be greatly appreciated. Once entering OMP, please go to the window to the school office and sign your child out. You must know your child's FAMILY DISMISSAL NUMBER or have a picture ID. Office staff will call your child upon your arrival. For safety reasons please do not go directly to the classroom.

**Sick Child Pickup-** If your child is too sick to remain at school, the nurses office will notify you and you should pick them up as soon as possible. We encourage students that are ill to remain at home until they feel better.

Pick-ups that occur on a regular basis may be arranged for the year if the parent sends in a note to the teacher and the office indicating the change for the year.

**Changes in Dismissal** - Any change to the ordinary dismissal for your child please notify the office as soon as you are aware of the change. Please try to talk out any dismissal changes with your child in the morning.

## **DISMISSAL NUMBERS**

Students will only be dismissed from school if the adult has the child's FAMILY DISMISSAL NUMBER or picture ID. All students/families are given a dismissal number upon registration. Parents/guardians are the only ones given this number. It is up to you to give it to trusted adults to pick up your child. If you lose this number you will have to come to school with a photo ID to get the number.

This process is for the safety of students. If someone else is to pick up your child he/she must know the FAMILY DISMISSAL NUMBERS and have a picture ID or the child will not be dismissed to this person!! You are the only one that can give out this number so you can ensure the safety of your child during dismissal.

Please follow all other dismissal requirements including writing a note and making sure you keep the emergency contacts updated.

- **A letter (purple colored paper)** was sent home with each child's class placement/K letter that included your FAMILY DISMISSAL NUMBER.
- Returning students will use the same number each year. If you are unsure of the number please come to the OMP office with an ID and we will provide you with the number.

**PM Bus Returns-** If a parent/adult is not visible at the bus stop when a Kindergarten student is returned home, the student will be brought back to school. When this occurs, parents will be called to pick up their child. Family dismissal numbers and a picture ID are required.

**PM Parent Pick-Up** - In the afternoon, family dismissal number will be required when picking up students in the car line. As each parent gets to the dismissal staff, he/she will give the FAMILY DISMISSAL NUMBER to the staff member, that child will then be called and dismissed.

- If the adult does not know the FAMILY DISMISSAL NUMBER he/she will be asked to go to the main office to be approved by the office staff. Please have a picture ID with you.
- If a child has not been picked up after the completion of the car line, the student will be brought to the office and we will notify the parents/guardians.

## **BUSING**

- Students who ride the bus must be picked up or dropped off at the same location each day. Morning and afternoon stops may be different locations.
- Parents of students who require pick-up or drop-off other than at home **MUST complete NEW DAYCARE FORM EACH YEAR.**
- Students are assigned to a specific bus. Since bus loads are carefully planned, it is difficult to honor requests for a student to take a bus other than the one to which he/she is assigned. Children assigned to a particular bus route *may not ride another bus for a different route* unless there is some important or emergency reason for it and may do so only with written permission from the parent and the Principal or central office designee. \*A birthday party or other such function is not an acceptable reason for such written permission.

The school authorities, the bus operators, and the police work closely to ensure safe operation of all buses. Parental cooperation plays a large part in the success of this phase of the school program. If a pupil's actions are dangerous to himself/herself or the safety of others, the privilege of riding a bus could be withdrawn. The school transportation contractor has specific rules of conduct on busses which will be distributed to each student rider at the beginning of the school year. Periodic review during the year will be helpful.

Buses are equipped with video cameras to ensure that children follow rules concerning the riding of school busses. (Please see the Behavior Expectations section for further details.)

### **SCHOOL BUS SAFETY AND CONDUCT RULES**

Your school day begins when you enter the school bus, and ends when you leave it. Riding a school bus is a PRIVILEGE that can be suspended or revoked if the following rules are not observed:

- Use a level 1 voice on the bus at all times
- Sit in assigned seat and keep track of your belongings
- Use walking feet; keep hands, feet and objects to yourself and keep the aisle clear

### **WARNING**

If a student misbehaves, a conversation will take place between the administration, student, driver, and parents to decide appropriate next steps. If a student becomes a concern for the bus driver, the administration will use a school-based think sheet to work with the student to reflect on their actions and create a plan for success. Occasionally, consequences/actions could result in a removal from the bus or short term inability to ride the bus to/from school.

## **School Visits and Parking**

Parents are welcome to visit our school, but making an appointment is recommended. Please, park in the designated areas. In the interest of maintaining building security, all visitors must stop at the school office upon entering the building, log into the visitor register and obtain a visitor's pass.

No traffic will be allowed in front of the building between 8:05 and 8:45 a.m. and 2:25 and 3:00 p.m. Buses will be arriving and departing during this time. This is being done to ensure the safety of the children entering and exiting the playground. If you park in the fire lanes or handicap parking there is a chance that you will receive a parking violation ticket.



### **Classroom Visitors, Volunteers and Chaperones:**

If you wish to volunteer, help in the classroom or attend field trips you will need to have an approved CORI. CORI forms are available in the office. CORI checks may take up to 2 weeks to process. No unauthorized person will be permitted access to any classroom. In addition, please adhere to the following:

- Parents must make prior arrangements with the teacher;
- All visitors/volunteers are to report to the main office first and receive a visitor sticker;
- No siblings will be allowed to accompany a parent volunteer to the classroom.

### **Attendance Policy**

Massachusetts State Law, Chapter 76, sets forth specific attendance requirements, penalties and procedures. It is also realized that student absences may be required due to illness or other good reason. With this in mind, the following Palmer School District Policy will be followed in order to comply with the law and to reinforce the school system's high priority regarding good attendance. The State Board of Education regulations require a student to be in school for at least 50% of a school day to be considered legally in attendance for that day. Therefore, arrival at school after 11:30 a.m. or dismissal prior to 11:30 a.m. constitutes an absence for the whole day. Even though considered legally absent when arriving late, we strongly encourage parents to get their youngsters to school for the remainder of the day so that as little instruction as possible is missed.

A student must be present in school ninety-five percent (95%) of the time for promotion. This means the student may not miss more than nine (9) days of school in order to remain in good standing.

- The school will send a letter to the parent/guardian after four (4) days of absence to warn that a problem might exist. A letter will also be sent to the parent/guardian after the student accrues six (6) absences out of the nine (9) allowed.
- If a student is absent more than nine (9) days, a conference will be held consisting of the parents/guardians, student, teacher(s), Principal, and other concerned parties to determine whether failure, repetition of the grade, or other alternative is warranted.
- A meeting will be scheduled to present reasons as to why the excess absences should be excused. Chronic or a long-term disabling illness, injury, or some major family catastrophic events are reasons which would be considered.

### **Student Absences**

- A parent/guardian must call the school on the day of the absence to notify officials of the absence.
- When they return to school, children must bring a note signed by a parent indicating the reason for the absence.
- It is good practice when you are at the doctors, dentist, or therapist to get a note indicating that your child had an appointment. This is documentation that allows an excused absence.
- In the case of long term illness, arrangements for homework must be made.
- Arrival after 11:30 or dismissal before 11:30 constitutes an absence for the whole day according to the Board of Education. Regardless, it is strongly encouraged that students attend as much of the day as possible.

### **Student Health and Wellness**

Every effort is made to care for your child's physical, mental and emotional well-being while he/she is in school. Sick and injured children are given the best possible care, but the responsibility for treatment rests with the family.

## Wellness Policy

The Palmer Public Schools recognize the important relationship between wellness and academic success inclusive of the entire school community. The intent of this policy is to outline the district's ongoing commitment in support and promotion of wellness in the areas of nutrition, physical activity, and other school based activities. Please access the PPS Wellness Policy JLCAA for the complete district policy.

## Medication

The administration of medication within the schools must adhere to the School Committee Policy 'Administering Medications' Policy 6345, effective February 23, 2000. When the prescribed medication is to be given during school hours, the following procedure will be followed.

- Authorization for dispensing prescription medication in school must have a written order by the student's physician. Some short term prescription medications can be administered by directions on the pharmacy label.
- Written permission from the student's parent or guardian must be sent to the school. Forms for this purpose will be available in the principal or nurse's office.
- The medication must be delivered by a responsible adult to the school in an original pharmacy container labeled as to the name and strength of medication, dosage and time to be administered, name of the student and prescribing physician. If a medication is taken both at home and school, duplicate containers should be requested from the Pharmacy to avoid unnecessary round trip transportation.
- The medication will be kept in a locked area (or refrigerated if necessary).
- All medication will be administered by the school nurse
- Some medications, at the direction of the school nurse, may be self administered by the student at school. Prerequisites are: written approval for self administration by physician and parent/guardian, student demonstrates competency in self administration to school nurse. The school nurse will supervise these students.

## Food Allergies

The Palmer Public Schools recognize that food allergies can pose a life-threatening risk to certain students. In order to provide a safe environment for all students, we ask that you adhere to the following:

- A nut free area will be provided in school as needed. Some foods may be prohibited from entering the classroom.
- Nut and nut products may not be used for art projects.
- *Birthdays are acknowledged but are not celebrated with parties, special snacks or outside treats at school.*

## Classroom Group Snacks

- All school snacks sent for class events must comply with the School Wellness Policy.
- Only store bought prepackaged food is allowed due to the possibility of allergic reaction.

Upon request, parents will be provided with a list of suggested healthy snacks at the beginning of the school year.

## Emergency Forms

Each school maintains an Emergency Information Form for each child. These are updated at the start of the school year. The form requests information such as the address, home telephone number of the child, plus the name, address, and telephone number of a friend or relative who would be willing to care for your child if you are not available. Under 'Remarks', you should indicate the hospital preferred.

The information on this form is extremely important, and we request your cooperation in filling it out and returning it immediately. If your child has a handicap or a particular health condition, please furnish us with any pertinent information which will enable us to make your child's adjustment to school a happy one. Finally, it is important to update this form should any of the information change during the course of the school year.

### **Dress Code**

Each school day, students are expected to maintain personal attire and hygiene that promote the health, safety and acceptable conduct standards of OMP.

- Students should be dressed to meet outdoor weather conditions for recess, including jackets, hats, gloves and boots when weather requires.
- Athletic shoes should be worn on Physical Education days.
- No hats or bandanas will be worn indoors.
- Sandals and open toed shoes without a back strap are discouraged.
- Attire that violates any policies of Palmer Public Schools should not be worn.

See District Policy JICA.

### **Enrichment/Extra Help Sessions**

The faculty will be reserving afternoons from 3:00-3:30 p.m. as extra help/enrichment sessions. Your child's teacher will notify you if your child will benefit from these sessions. Transportation is not provided by the school following these sessions.

### **Lost and Found**

Articles which have been found in the building or on school grounds are turned into the office, where they may be claimed by their owners. Losses should be reported and the Lost and Found box checked periodically whenever losses occur. Articles left aboard busses may be claimed at the office of the transportation company.

### **Media Coverage**

Candid pictures of children may be taken throughout the school year as they participate in various events. Some of those may be submitted to the newspaper. If you have any objections to having your child photographed, please indicate that on the official sign-off sheet.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Conferences between parent and teacher are available at all times. Please call to set up a conference with your child's teacher if you have any questions or problems. In addition, there is a scheduled parent teacher conference night held each year - the date will be announced in early Fall. More information on this event will be sent home to parents during the school year.

### **Personal Belongings**

Toys, dolls, playing and trading cards, cell phones, any electronic equipment, such as Gameboys, DS games, IPODS, CD players, or handheld video games, etc. are NOT allowed at school. The above items will be confiscated and held in the Principal's office until they can be picked up by a family member. If these items disappear the school is not held liable. Palmer Public Schools discourages personal belongings being brought into school, however the teacher can use their own discretion to use an electronic device for the use of educational purposes.

Students should avoid bringing unnecessary money and expensive belongings or clothing to school as a general practice since there is always the danger of loss or theft. Pets and companion animals are not allowed at school, however, trained guide-dogs are allowed.

### **Progress Reports/Report Cards**

Progress reports are issued at the midpoint of each quarter. Report cards are issued 4 times each school year for grades 1-5 and three times each school year for Kindergarten students (second/third/fourth quarters). Grades will close approximately one week prior to report cards being issued. You may keep the reports but please sign and return the progress report and report card envelopes.

Report Cards will be issued :

November 9th - 1st Quarter

January 25th- 2nd Quarter

April 5th- 3rd Quarter

Last day of School- 4th Quarter

### **School Breakfast and Lunch**

- A well balanced breakfast and lunch is available to all students at no cost for the 2021-2022 school year.
- Children may not share food brought from home and are discouraged from bringing candy and other sugar based treats to school.

### **School Council**

The Old Mill Pond School Council will meet in September and scheduled meetings will be held throughout the school year. Meeting dates will be posted and parents are invited to attend.

### **School Library Circulation**

Students are allowed to check out books from the school library on days scheduled by the school staff. All books should be returned as soon as the child has read them but no later than the next scheduled library date. When books are overdue, a two-week overdue notice will be given to the student. Two weeks later an overdue letter will be mailed home along with a bill for the replacement cost (total of four weeks).

Students with overdue books will be free to use materials while in the library, but will lose borrowing privileges until a resolution has occurred (i.e., the book has been returned, replaced, or paid for).

### **Student Lockers**

Each student will be assigned a hall locker. They are for the use of the assigned students and should not be shared. All students must realize the importance of proper locker security. Because the locker is the property of the school and not the student, the administration has the right to open and examine the contents of a student's locker at any time. The use of the locker is entrusted to the student, and it is the obligation of each student to keep the locker neat, orderly, free of marks/writing and secure at all times.

### **Testing**

Students will participate in mandated testing such as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment test as mandated by the state.

## Student Behavioral Expectations

Old Mill Pond School has established high standards for behavior. When we demonstrate these positive expected behaviors, we help create a safe and orderly learning environment that promotes accelerated achievement. These behaviors also lead to measures of personal satisfaction and success in school. Students should be fully aware that the teacher has the primary responsibility for maintaining order. In the classroom, those actions which are disruptive to learning will be dealt with by the teacher. The goal of teachers is to help all students learn and improve which includes their social-emotional learning and their behavior. Expectations are based on their grade level. Please encourage your child to follow all classroom and school rules to help maintain an appropriate learning environment for all students.

When students' actions require administrative intervention, we will follow progressive disciplinary procedures. This means initial and one time incidents will have matching consequences. Repeated incidents will have gradually increasing consequences to support students learning alternative ways to solve problems. Consequently, students may receive different disciplinary action based on the specific problem. These disciplinary actions could include, but are not limited to, a warning, time out, loss of privilege, specific instruction on problem solving, restitution, parent call, classroom detention, conference with parent, referral to the office, office detentions, suspension, etc.

Please see the District-wide Code of Conduct for district suspension and expulsion policies for complete procedure on page 45.

The Palmer Public Schools has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Palmer Police Department and the Hampden County District Attorney's Office in which there is communication as needed with the School Resource Officer based on student issues. Please see the district website for a full memorandum.

### **EXPECTATIONS - SCHOOLWIDE**

***All students are expected to be..... RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE AND READY.*** The matrix below lists what these expectations look and sound like in different areas around the school. This is the teaching tool used by the school to help students learn and understand what is expected of them. Please feel free to go over this with your student(s).



# Respectful Responsible Ready

## Classroom

- *Raise my hand*
- *Wait my turn*
- *Use an inside voice*
- *Keep my hands and feet to myself*

- *Use my time appropriately*
- *Do my best*
- *Be helpful*

- *Be ready*
- *Follow directions and routines*
- *Have my materials ready*

## Cafeteria

- *Use an indoor voice*
- *Sit appropriately*
- *Keep my hands to myself*
- *Walk*

- *Clean up after myself*
- *Raise my hand to ask questions*

- *Sit quietly and wait for directions*

## Hallways

- *Listen*
- *Quiet voices*
- *Walk quietly*
- *Watch where I'm going*

- *Go only where I need to go*

- *Level 1 voice Facing forward*
- *Hands at my side*

## Playground

- *Use kind words*
- *Take turns*
- *Keep hands and feet to myself*
- *Use equipment appropriately*

- *Ask permission to leave the playground*
- *Share equipment*
- *Include others in activities*

- *Line up when the whistle is blown*
- *Enter the building quietly*

## Bus

- *Level 1 voice*
- *Sit in my seat*
- *Keep the aisle clear*
- *Keep hands and feet to myself*

- *Keep my materials in my backpack*
- *Sit in my assigned area*

- *Walk on and off the bus*

## Bathroom

- *Thoughtful of others space*
- *Use supplies correctly*

- *Use appropriate language & volume*
- *Flush and wash hands*
- *Use time wisely*

- *Tell an adult if you need to use the restroom*

## HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

It is important for teachers, parents and administration to establish positive lines of communication from the very beginning of each school year and to maintain regular communication during the school year. Individual teachers communicate with parents in a variety of ways including weekly or monthly newsletters, flyers, agendas, phone calls and email. Information about class events is sent home with students in a variety of ways including a school wide monthly newsletter.

Old Mill Pond School works to create a school environment where parent/caregivers are welcome at all times to speak freely with school staff with questions and concerns regarding academic and social issues. Parents/caregivers who wish to contact school staff should please use these guidelines for assistance in getting needed information:

- First contact your child's classroom teacher. This is the most direct route to finding needed information. Teachers are always ready to assist with immediate concerns.
- For further questions, contact a member of the guidance department or administration. Administrators can directly assist in resolving questions or concerns once the classroom teacher has been contacted.

Stay in touch with what your child is learning. Ask him/her about the school day. Ask what was the best part of the day and why. Students in Grades 2, 3, and 4 will receive an assignment book. Please review and sign the agenda on a nightly basis. Review the work he/she brings home. Please help us help your child by communicating by phone or email with teachers and/or the adjustment counselor to let them know of any problems outside of school that might affect your child's day.

We encourage you to call, email or schedule an appointment regarding questions or comments about your child or school. Please feel free to call the office (413-283-4300) or send a note whenever you feel the need for information or to share ideas. **Please send a note when there will be a deviation in your child's routine or there is a situation that may affect his/her performance.**

Should it be necessary to raise a question or concern about any school related issue we ask that you please begin by contacting your child's teacher directly. The parent and teacher should discuss the concern and work together for a resolution. You can contact teachers through the school wide email or you may leave a message in the office if the teacher cannot be reached when you call (413-283-4300). If your question or concern is still not resolved, the next step is to telephone or request a meeting with the administration (413-283-4300). Every effort will be made to resolve your concerns at the earliest possible time.

## WEBSITE

Please visit the Old Mill Pond website at [www.palmerschools.org](http://www.palmerschools.org) The web site is updated regularly with school and PTO events. You will find the monthly newsletter, calendar, menu and events posted on our home page. Please check the website often!

## ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Parents will be asked to sign an acknowledgement of the Acceptable Use Policy that is included with the Student Information Sheets at the beginning of the school year. Please access the PPS Acceptable Use Policy for more information.

## **BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM - “KIDS CORNER”**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for choosing the “Kids Corner” at Old Mill Pond School for your child’s before and after school care. We are very excited to welcome you and your family to our program!! Our program is available every weekday morning and afternoon for students attending Palmer Public Schools in grades K – 5.

The “Kids Corner” will provide a safe, fun environment for children to continue learning and developing before and after school.

\*Our Before School program will begin at 6:30 am and run until the start of the school day. Breakfast will be available and children can choose from a variety of activities.

\*Our After School program will begin at the end of the school day and run till 6:00pm. We will provide a healthy snack, homework assistance, and activities including, sports, outdoor and indoor play, arts and crafts, science, math, Spanish, cooking, story time and so much more.

Each morning, parents or guardians must accompany all children into the building and sign them into the program. In the afternoon the students will be dismissed from their classrooms and walk to the cafeteria to join the program. Children departing from the program must be signed out by a parent or guardian.

On Teacher Professional days (there are 4 scheduled) a full day program will be available. Participants must sign up in advance for these days.

When school is cancelled due to inclement weather or any other reason, “Kids Corner” will also be cancelled. On snow delays, “Kids Corner” will follow the 1 or 2 hour delay and start 1 or 2 hours later than the normally scheduled opening time.

Please review this information carefully. Complete and accurate information helps us to provide the best possible care for your child. If you have any questions or need additional information please feel free to call the program director at (413) 896 – 9756 or email at [kidscorner@palmerschools.org](mailto:kidscorner@palmerschools.org).



# Palmer High School

## Student/Guardian Handbook 2021-2022



### District Vision

*Palmer Public Schools will be a community that develops lifelong learners by engaging in a rigorous curriculum which creates opportunities for academic and social/emotional growth of all students through a safe, supportive, and collaborative environment.*

### Palmer High School Vision

*Palmer High School is a safe and supportive environment with relevant and rigorous curricula that will help build positive real-world connections. Positive relationships are developed to encourage student engagement and motivation to allow student success and to create a community where there is equity, inclusion, and diversity.*

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## ACADEMICS

### Graduation Requirements

Students need to obtain 28 credits to graduate. Credits are earned in grades 9-12, with the exception of grade 8 Algebra I.

Graduation Requirements	MassCore Requirements
English: 4 credits Pass: Freshman English, Sophomore English, American Literature and 1 core English course	No additional requirement Must pass 1 English course each year from grades 9-12
Math: 4 credits Pass: Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry	1 Additional Math Credit Must pass 1 Math course each year from grades 9-12
Science: 3 credits Pass: Intro to Physics, Biology and one additional core Science course	3 credits must be in a lab science (all PHS science courses are labs)
Social Studies: 3 credits Pass: World History, US History I, and US History II or AP U.S. History	No additional requirement
1 Health & 2 PE: 3 credits Pass: 1 each year of high school	No additional requirement
Fine Arts: 1 credit	No additional requirement
Foreign Language: 2 credits	2 Credits in the same language
Electives: 8 Credits	5 additional “ <b>CORE</b> ” courses
Community Service: 10 hours	
Total Credits = 28	

**Note:** Eighth grade courses will appear on the student’s transcript; however they will not be used in the calculation of class rank.

## Community Service

Community service hours for graduation credit may be earned during grades 9-12 only. All community service hours must be pre-approved by each student's School Counselor prior to beginning community service. Students are responsible for maintaining their community service hours, and must submit those hours to their School Counselor. The School Counselor will acknowledge completion of those hours to the senior class advisor. Students should maintain a copy for their own records, should any discrepancies arise.

**Any senior who does not meet all graduation requirements will not participate in senior activities and graduation ceremonies. The graduation ceremony is a privilege. The principal decides if a student walks. If a student is serving a suspension at the time of graduation, they will not walk during the ceremony.**

## Palmer High School Level of Courses

All courses are assigned a level according to the following criteria. See PHS Program of Studies for a detailed description of each level.

**Level 1:** Basic or Remedial

**Level 2:** General

**Level 3:** Honors

**Level 4:** Advanced Placement

## Palmer High School Advanced Placement (AP)

### Course Requirements

Students who take AP courses and who complete them with passing grades will earn a cord at graduation. The cost of this exam is set yearly by the College Board and is the responsibility of the student. If a financial hardship exists, please consult with the AP Coordinator or School Counselor at PHS.

## Palmer High School Marking System

The marking system is based on a student's individual achievement in class. To keep families informed of a student's progress, at the midpoint of each quarter progress reports will be posted to Rediker. Report cards are issued every quarter. This quarterly or ten-week scholastic achievement mark reflects the teacher's overall evaluation of the student's contribution in class, as well as the quality of his/her independent projects. Courses grades are reported and printed numerically on the student's report card and cumulative transcript. Palmer High School intends to move to a paperless system of Progress Reports. These reports will now be available electronically through Rediker. High School teachers post grades to Rediker regularly. Alert messages will be sent home at the 5-week point in each term, notifying families. Students/Families that are unable to access the electronic reports/internet can opt into receiving paper copies of their/their child's progress reports by making a request to the Guidance Secretary.

Grades:

A+ 97-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D 65-69
A 93-96	B 83-86	C 73-76	F 64 and Below
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	

### **Palmer High School Recording of Incomplete/Grade Change**

Students who receive a grade of *Incomplete* will have ten school days from the end of the term to complete the work, after which the grade will be recorded accordingly. Teachers will complete and submit a Grade Change form to the Guidance Secretary no later than fifteen school days from the end of the term.

### **Palmer High School Selection of Class Valedictorian And Salutatorian**

In as much as the School Committee believes that designating a student as class valedictorian or salutatorian is an important and significant academic honor, the Committee establishes the following criteria for assigning these titles:

1. Class valedictorian and salutatorian will be determined by Quality Point Average (QPA) at the end of the third quarter of the senior year. A minimum of four consecutive semesters at Palmer High School is required for eligibility. Students must be enrolled as Palmer High School students for their junior and senior years.
2. The class valedictorian shall be the senior student with the highest-class rank, as determined by district policy, class rank, and who meets all other requirements defined herein.
3. The class salutatorian shall be the senior student with the second highest class rank, as determined by district policy, of class rank, and who meets all other requirements defined herein.
4. In the case of the two qualified, highest ranking students having equal class rank, the student with the higher QPA calculated for only Honors and AP courses (or their equivalent) taken at Palmer High School shall be designated and the second student salutatorian. If the two students have equal QPA calculated in this manner, then the two students shall be designated as co-valedictorians.
5. In the case of the two qualified, second highest ranking students having equal class rank, the student with the higher QPA calculated for only honors and AP courses taken at Palmer High School shall be designated salutatorian. If the two students have equal QPAs calculated in this manner, then the two students shall be designated as co-salutatorians.

### **Palmer High School Determination of Class Rank**

Class ranking shall be determined for students in attendance at Palmer High School at the end of the freshman, sophomore and junior years. A minimum of four consecutive semesters at Palmer High School is required for eligibility. Class rank for all students shall be based upon the QPA calculated according to the following method, with the student having the highest QPA assigned to the rank of 1. Succeeding ranks shall be assigned to students in descending order according to their QPA's. Students with equal QPA's shall be given the same class rank, equal to the highest available unassigned rank. When more than one student is assigned a single rank, the next available rank for assignation shall be the rank that would be available if each of those students had been assigned a successive rank. For example, if two students had QPAs that would qualify them to rank third in the class, each would be assigned that rank, and the student with the next highest QPA would be ranked fifth. No rank of fourth would be assigned. For the purpose of determining class rank, a student's QPA shall be calculated as follows:

1. All courses taken at Palmer High School will be included in the calculation of a student's QPA. The final grade of a course retaken, after the receipt of a failing grade, will be averaged into the overall GPA along with the original grade. Courses physically taken at a site outside of the Palmer Public Schools may be counted toward credit for graduation, but shall not be used in calculating a student's QPA.

2. The QPA shall be determined by totaling the point values for all eligible courses, and then dividing the sum by the total number of credits received by the student for those courses. This calculation shall be carried to the second decimal place.

3. Course levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 are indicated in the Palmer High School Program of Studies, published annually.

4. In an instance where a student accelerates his/her graduation date, he/she will not impact the current graduating class rank. The student who accelerates will earn his/her official class rank number, but will not alter any other senior's rank. Instead, the accelerated student will be considered tied with the senior of the same rank.

### **Palmer High School Quality Point System –Rank in Class**

Rank in class is computed by the number of quality points earned over a period of four years. All courses will be counted, thereby compensating those students who take additional courses that are more difficult.

<b>COURSE GRADE, LEVEL &amp; QUALITY POINTS</b>			
<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3 - Honors</b>	<b>Level 4 –AP</b>
<b>Numeric Average +0</b>	<b>Numeric Average +0</b>	<b>Numeric Average +5</b>	<b>Numeric Average +10</b>

### **Palmer High School Honor Roll**

The Honor Roll is posted at the end of each 10 week period. High Honors: Students must have all A's. Honors: Students must have all B's or better.

### **Class Eligibility**

Students must accumulate the specified number of credits in order to officially advance to the next grade level. Please refer to the table below. Students entering our school will be placed at an appropriate grade level, based on documentation from sending/previous institutions. Students must accumulate the specified number of credits in order to advance to the next grade level.

To be considered a SOPHOMORE, the student must have previously accumulated 6 credits in their freshman year;

To be considered a JUNIOR, the student must have previously accumulated 12 CREDITS in their sophomore year;

To be considered a SENIOR, the student must have previously accumulated 20 CREDITS in their junior year.

\*Students entering our school will be placed at an appropriate grade based on the number of credits earned.

### **Palmer High School National Honor Society**

The National Honor Society (NHS) is an organization that was established to recognize outstanding high school students. More than just an honor roll, NHS serves to honor those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Character. Members are formally inducted into the Society in the fall of each school year.

ELIGIBILITY A student must:

1. be a Junior or Senior
2. have a cumulative GPA of 90% (GPA is NOT rounded)

3. have an exemplary disciplinary record history
4. have attended PHS for at least one semester prior to the induction date for that year
5. have measurable, verified service to the school and/or community
6. demonstrate involvement and leadership in school activities
7. submit the student information form typed and completed by the deadline

Students who meet these requirements are then evaluated by the School Council on the basis of leadership, service and character.

**PROBATION/DISMISSAL:** Members of the National Honor Society (NHS) are expected to be exemplary school citizens at all times and to maintain the standards by which they were chosen for membership. Each year they are expected to participate in regularly scheduled meetings/events, two group service projects, the induction ceremony for new NHS members, and complete twenty-five hours of community service. Students may be removed from the NHS for actions unbecoming a member. Circumstances around probation/dismissal are judged on a case by case basis. Such reasons for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

1. Cumulative grade point average falling below 90% for two semesters in succession;
2. Unexcused failure to participate in meetings, events or service projects;
3. Repeated failure to cooperate with school personnel or to abide by school rules;
4. School suspension;
5. Any other incident, including those which may occur off school grounds or not during the school day/year, which the School Council determines to be conduct unbecoming an NHS member based on the violation of the NHS tenets of leadership, service, and character.

A full description of the By-Laws of the National Honor Society is located in the Library/Media Center and here: NHS National Constitution

<https://www.nhs.us/utility/about-us/constitution-and-governance/nhs-national-constitution>.

### **Palmer High School Athletic Eligibility Requirements**

Palmer High School is a member of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association and must abide by the Association's eligibility rules. In order to be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity, a student cannot fail more than one class in a marking period in order to be eligible during the next marking period (note that 4th term grades affect the fall eligibility of the following school year.) In addition, to be eligible for the fall season, a student must pass seven out of eight classes the previous school year (grades 9-12). Second quarter marks, and not semester grades determine third quarter eligibility (MIAA rule 58.1.) No student who has been absent from school on the day of a school sponsored event will be eligible to participate in that event unless approved by the Principal or Athletic Director.

As a demonstration of our commitment to academic excellence and to ensure that each student-athlete is completing his/her responsibilities during the athletic season, Palmer High School has created a Student Athlete Academic Support Program. The information from the athletic progress reports is compiled by the Athletic Advisor through classroom teachers, on a bi-weekly basis. This information is used to identify students who are required to attend the Student Athlete Academic Support Program. This program meets regularly during each athletic season; specific days are set by the administrator of this program, and made public prior to the first session. Any student who has a 69 or less in a class will be required to attend the Student Athlete Academic Support Program the following two weeks. Any student who fails to attend this program will receive consequences according to the following list:

- 1st Offense – Athletic Director Written Warning

- 2nd Offense – Athletic Director/Coach determines loss of playing time
- 3rd Offense – Non -participation (entire game) in the next scheduled sport event

MIAA Handbook:

[http://www.miaa.net/gen/miaa\\_generated\\_bin/documents/basic\\_module/MIAA\\_Handbook21\\_23.pdf](http://www.miaa.net/gen/miaa_generated_bin/documents/basic_module/MIAA_Handbook21_23.pdf).

### Palmer High School Renaissance Program

The focus of this program is on rewarding students for hard work in the classroom, attendance, and respectable behavior.

Eligibility is determined by the preceding term and occurs during terms 1, 2, & 3 only. The program resets each student at the start of the school year.

Level	Criteria	Rewards (during eligible term)
<b>Blue Panther (Grades 8-12)</b>	Grade of 90 or higher in all classes	Discount on school store merchandise
	No disciplinary action	Discount on athletic admission at PHS events (excluding tournament play and Thanksgiving football games)
	No more than 2 unexcused absences per term	Exemption of one final exam at teacher's discretion with a grade over 90 (when qualified during terms 2 and 4)
		Bonus reward for seniors and juniors who are able to maintain a Blue Panther Card all year: \$10 rebate on parking at the end of the school year
<b>White Panther (Grades 8-12)</b>	Grade of 80 or higher in all classes	Discount off of school store merchandise
	No administrative discipline (office detentions, internals, externals)	Discount on athletic admissions, at PHS events only (excluding tournament play and Thanksgiving football games)
	No more than 2 unexcused absences per term	
<b>High Honors (Grades 6-7)</b>	All A's on report card with only <i>Excellent</i> or <i>Good</i> in Effort and Conduct; no disciplinary action	Recognition at Renaissance ceremony; in-school privileges to be determined



<b>Honors (Grades 6-7)</b>	All A's and B's on report card with only <i>Excellent</i> and <i>Good</i> in Effort and Conduct; no disciplinary action	Recognition at Renaissance Ceremony; In-school privileges to be determined
<b>Student of the Quarter (Grades 6-7)</b>	Selected by teachers based on overall improvement	Recognition at Renaissance Ceremony in-school privileges to be determined
<b>Presidential Award Educational Excellence (Grade 6-7)</b>	Recognizes students for achievement of academic success in the classroom. Marks of 90 or higher all year, demonstrate high motivation, initiative, integrity, intellectual depth, leadership qualities, and exceptional judgment	Recognition at the Presidential Awards Ceremony, celebratory pin, certificate, and graduation cord
<b>Presidential Award Educational Achievement (grades 6-7)</b>	Recognizes students for achievement of educational growth, improvement, commitment to and intellectual development in their academic subjects	Recognition at the Presidential Awards Ceremony, celebratory pin, and graduation cord
<b>Joseph F. Ketschek Award (grade 7)</b>	This award goes to the student who knows what to say, but always makes time to listen, puts the success of others first, and focuses on how the game is played.	Recognition at the Presidential Awards Ceremony
<b>Brendan J. MacDonnell Memorial Award (grade 7)</b>	This award is based on concern for others, a good sense of humor, trustworthiness, and a love for learning.	Recognition at the Presidential Awards Ceremony

### Palmer High School Extra-help Sessions

To aid in furnishing the most help possible to our students, the faculty will be reserving afternoons as extra-help sessions. The amount of time necessary will be determined by the teacher. Transportation is not provided by the school following Extra-help Sessions.

## ATTENDANCE

It is the belief of the School Committee that regular school attendance is necessary for student success. In addition, Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Sections 1-5 mandate school attendance. Therefore, the following policies mandate student attendance and set penalties for not complying.

1. At Palmer High School, a student must be in course attendance for at least ninety-five percent (95%) of class sessions in order to receive academic credit toward graduation. Under this policy no more than nine (9) days of nonattendance are allowed for a full year course and four and one half (4 1/2) days for a semester course.

a. Courses which meet less than five (5) times a week, such as Physical Education, also fall under the 95% guidelines and would allow fewer absences due to the reduced number of class sessions.

b. Students who are tardy for more than one-half a class will be considered absent from that class for the day.

c. Teachers, Assistant Principals and School Counselors will keep parents/guardians apprised of students in jeopardy of failing due to non-attendance.

d. An accurate record of attendance will be kept by every teacher in every class every day.

2. Palmer High School students may appeal the denial of credit because of non-attendance to an Appeals Committee.

a. Absences may be appealed for the following reasons provided the attendance expectations for the balance of the course are satisfied:

- 1) Extended illness documented by a physician's statement
- 2) Death in the immediate family
- 3) Court appearances
- 4) School sponsored activities
- 5) Other unusual circumstances which the School Committee deems valid

b. The decision of the appeals committee is final, subject only to an appeal to the Superintendent and, if requested, to the School Committee.

Schools are required to project an annual school calendar of 180 actual school attendance days and students are expected to be there for each of them. The Palmer School Committee endorses the following mandatory attendance policy:

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulations requires a student to be in school for at least 50% of a school day to be considered legally in attendance for that day. Even though considered legally absent when arriving late, we strongly encourage parents to assist their child(ren) to school for the remainder of the day so that as little instruction as possible is missed.

A student must be present in school ninety-five percent (95%) of the time for promotion. This means the student may not miss more than nine (9) days of school in order to remain in good standing.

See School Committee Policy Manual for full description.

## **Requirements**

Students and parents need to be aware that all absences (excused and unexcused) count towards the absences per year on the 4.5 absences per semester course. Absences because of minor illness/injury and family vacations do count in the total 4.5 or 9 absences. Absences with medical documentation of major illness/injury may be excused. A limited number of guidance-approved college visitations are excused absences. Students who arrive late or are dismissed and are absent for one or more periods should be aware that these absences count toward the 4.5 or 9 day absence limit for those classes missed.

1. A student must be in course attendance as stated below in order to receive academic credit toward graduation. Under this policy no more than 9 days of non-attendance are allowed for a full year course and 4.5 days for a semester course. The 9 day (or 4.5 day) limit more than adequately allows for minor illnesses, medical appointments, driving permits, etc.

2. Teachers, School Counselors and Assistant Principals will keep parents apprised of student nonattendance through progress reports and report cards.

3. Phone calls are made daily, notifying families of a student's nonattendance.

4. If a student misses half of a period or more, this will also count toward the absence limit for that class period.

5. Families will seek administrator approval for all planned absences.

## **Truancy (Through 15 Years of Age)/Loss of Credit**

Truancy is defined as any student who stays out of school for 14 half days or 7 full days without permission acceptable to the school. Students who are truant will not be readmitted to school until a parent conference is held. Each day of truancy counts as lost instruction in each class missed and could have a serious effect on the ultimate class grade. Students who continue to be truant after all measures have been extended will be referred to the district court under a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) application.

## **Parents/Guardian Role in Attendance**

Massachusetts compulsory education laws require children aged seven and older to attend school, unless they are deemed mentally or physically unable to attend or have immediate needs at home. Parents who fail to comply may be fined in court.

A parent/guardian must call the school on the day of the absence to notify officials of the absence.

- When they return to school, children must bring a note signed by a parent indicating the reason for the absence.
- When you are at the doctor's, dentist's, or therapist's office obtain a note indicating that your child had an appointment. This letter must be signed by a medical professional, not stamped, and include the exact dates of absence(s), not a range. This is documentation that allows an excused absence.
- In the case of long term illness, arrangements for homework must be made by contacting the main office
- Arrival after 11:00 a.m. or dismissal before 11:00 a.m. constitutes an absence for the entire day. Regardless, it is strongly encouraged that students attend as much of the day as possible.

### **Attendance and Participation in Activities**

It is understood that students will be present in school in order to participate in a practice, game, or activity that day by eleven o'clock (11:00) a.m. A student cannot be dismissed from school before 11:00 and still practice or play. The 11:00 a.m. rule can be waived if dismissal or tardiness is a result of a family, legal, educational, or medical matter. Any such waiver must be approved by the Principal. Any lateness for medical reasons must be substantiated by a written notice from the parent and will be presented to the Principal's Office upon the student's arrival at school. Team and activity members on suspension for any disciplinary infraction will not be allowed to practice or participate in any event for the duration of the suspension. In the case of assigned detention, students will be expected to serve the detention before reporting to the practice.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor of the extracurricular activity to ascertain whether or not the students are eligible to participate on a day-to-day basis. The administration reserves the right to suspend from all extracurricular activities a student who is blatantly disregarding and not serving Office Detentions until the student meets his or her obligation(s). A student accruing excessive detentions/suspensions throughout the year, and/or violating the school's drug and alcohol, and/or weapons policy, and/or fighting in school, during the school day on school grounds, or during school sponsored events may be prohibited by administration from participating in extracurricular events, graduation, activities, sports, prom, dances, clubs etc.

### **Tardy to School**

It is essential that students are on time for school and do not interrupt the first period class by entering late. Students who are tardy to school will receive consequences according to the following levels, and chronic tardiness may warrant a parent conference:

Every 3rd tardy will = 1 office detention (up to the first 12 tardies)

Every 3rd tardy after 12 = parent conference with administration and school counselor and loss of parking privileges for the equivalent of one quarter if applicable.

The Palmer High School Principal reserves the right to remove parking privileges for any student who is excessively tardy.

An excused tardy is one where a note from home provided within 48 hours reports a valid reason for the student to be tardy. Valid reasons are limited to doctor's appointments, illness, and family emergencies. Oversleeping, excessive reports of missing the bus or other chronic excuses without taking action to remedy the situation are not valid reasons for being late to school.

Students who arrive after 8:12 a.m., will be considered absent from the first period class. A student missing more than 42 minutes, or half of a class period due to tardiness or dismissal will be considered absent from any and all classes for which this applies.

### **Authorization for Note Writing**

Experience has shown that parents/guardians wish to know when students are not present in school. Therefore, all parents or guardians must write a note acknowledging that the student was absent or is tardy, or to be dismissed, for a specific, unavoidable reason. Students will not be dismissed without parent/legal guardian acknowledgement.

Students who are eighteen may submit written dismissal requests solely for business or personal reasons which cannot be completed during after school hours. In the case of students living with a parent/legal guardian, the school will contact the parent/legal guardian to confirm the request and unsubstantiated requests to leave will not be granted.

Acceptable Reasons for Early Dismissal: The Palmer School Committee has approved the following reasons as acceptable for early dismissal:

1. Student illness at school if the parent approves of the dismissal. Parent/Emergency Contact must pick the student up at the school;
2. Appointments with doctors, dentists, and other medical personnel in those instances when appointments cannot be scheduled after school hours;
3. Family illness if dismissal is approved by a parent;
4. Driving road tests scheduled by the Registry of Motor Vehicles that cannot be scheduled after school hours;
5. Home emergencies with final determination to be made by the Principal or designee;
6. Appointments at district court, other courts or with law enforcement officials

## **BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

### **Classroom Expectations**

All students are expected to follow their daily schedule and report to all classes on time and with the necessary materials. Books issued to students shall be maintained with reasonable care and, if damaged, lost or written in, must be paid for at the end of the school year. All books issued to students must be covered. It shall be the responsibility of the classroom teacher to check that this is done. It is recommended that all books be safeguarded when in use and secured in the student's locker with the lock set when not in use.

**Makeup Work:** When a student has been absent from school, he/she is required to make up all the work which has been assigned in his/her classes during the absence. He/she should report to the teacher of each subject, and will be informed of the required makeup work. This work must be given to the subject teacher as soon as possible. If all the required work has not been completed and submitted within a period of time equal to two times the number of days absent, the student may receive an *Incomplete* mark on his/her report card. A student is given up to ten school days after a marking period to make up the *Incomplete*; thereafter, his/her grade will be recorded accordingly.

### **Dress Code**

Any apparel or item with a message or symbol advocating/highlighting violence, weapons, alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, or illegal behavior, or expressing vulgarity such that it causes disruption or disorder, or regarded by administrators as dangerous or adversely impacting the educational process, may not be worn in school or at school events or activities. Students will not be prevented from attending school or a school function, or otherwise discriminated against, so long as their dress and appearance meet the requirements set forth in the student handbook.

In order to provide a safe environment for all, hats, bandanas and hoods are prohibited in the building. See District Policy JICA.

### **Electronic Devices**

Any electronic devices, including, but not limited to radios, tape recorders, video recorders, walkman/radio/CD players, headphones, cellular phones, laser pointers, handheld video games, two way radios, walkie-talkies or any other electronic device that could be disruptive or considered a safety issue are not to be used, except when authorized by staff for use during classroom instruction, or as an instructional aid. Failure to follow this policy will lead to confiscation of such items and/or discipline. Beepers are prohibited (with the exception of Fire Department personnel who are registered with the office). Students are allowed to utilize cellphones/MP3

devices/Digital Music Players during their lunch and the passing of classes, as long as they do not create a safety hazard or infringe upon other persons' rights at school. Securing any permissible electronic items is the responsibility of the student and items should not be brought to school without the means to secure such items, as the school/district is not responsible for any lost or damaged items. Please call the main office at PHS at 413-283-6511 should you desire to speak with your child. If your child wishes to contact you during the school day, he/she should request permission to report to the main office for use of the office telephone. Students are not permitted to use cell phones/electronic devices during class. Teachers will instruct students where to store cell phones/electronic devices during class.

### **Identification Cards**

Palmer High School identification cards, upon distribution, must be carried by students at all times. Refusal to show their identification card upon request to an administrator, faculty or staff member, is a suspendable offense. To be admitted to all dances, Palmer High School identification cards must be in the students' possession.

### **Outstanding Obligations**

Near the end of each quarter and/or at the end of each school year a list of students owing any outstanding obligations will be compiled in the Principal's office. A bill will be mailed to the student at the end of the school year. Students who fail to meet these obligations will not receive books or materials the following term and/or may be prosecuted through the local small claims court. Any senior with outstanding obligations must fulfill them or make restitution before they will be allowed to participate in senior class events/graduation ceremonies.

Any outstanding disciplinary obligations at the end of the school year may be served in the office during the summer. In instances where the outstanding obligations are not served over the summer, student obligations will carry over to the next school year.

### **Personal Belongings**

Cell phones/electronic devices (except as noted below), music players, cameras, radios, laser lights, dolls, toys, playing cards, trading cards, etc. are not allowed at school without administrator permission. Inappropriate use of personal belongings may be confiscated and held in the principal's office until the end of the day. Students should avoid bringing unnecessary money and expensive belongings or clothing to school as a general practice since there is always the danger of loss or theft. Glass bottles and cans are prohibited on school grounds. Plastic water bottles and items bought at the school store and cafeteria are allowed.

Toys, dolls, playing and trading cards, cell phones, any electronic equipment including, but not limited to Gameboys, DS games, IPODS, CD players, or handheld video games, etc. are NOT allowed at school. The above items will be confiscated and held in the Principal's office until they can be picked up by a family member. If these items disappear the school is not fiscally liable. Palmer Public Schools discourages personal belongings being brought into school, however the teacher can use their own discretion to use an electronic device for the use of educational purposes.

Students should avoid bringing unnecessary money and expensive belongings or clothing to school as a general practice since there is always the danger of loss or theft. Pets and companion animals are not allowed at school, however, trained guide-dogs are allowed.

## **BREAKFAST/LUNCH**

A breakfast and lunch program is offered and available to students at no cost. The menus for the coming month are published on each school's website and school monthly calendar.

## **CHEATING & PLAGIARISM**

In order to provide and promote a safe, supportive, respectful environment dedicated to the academic, personal, and cultural evolution of every student, academic integrity is a theme that runs through PHS.

### Definitions:

#### **CHEATING**

1. Submitting work done by others as your own;
2. Giving or receiving unauthorized aid on any assignment or examination, including computer translation;
3. Submitting your own academic work for credit more than once, whether in whole or in part, in the same course or different courses without the approval of the teacher who is responsible for assigning credit to the work;
4. Attempted cheating

#### **PLAGIARISM**

1. Presenting as one's own, the words, ideas, concepts, images, or work of another without proper acknowledgement;
2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement. The direct quotation of the words of another must be set off in quotation marks and acknowledged in parenthetical citations or other acceptable form of citation. The use of paraphrased material, or the ideas, concepts, images, or work of another must also be acknowledged in a parenthetical citation or other acceptable form of citation. Acknowledging sources used in the preparation of an assignment solely in a works cited page or bibliography does not constitute an acceptable acknowledgement of the works, ideas, concepts, images, or work of another used in the assignment.

#### **SABOTAGE**

1. Destroying or damaging another student's work, or otherwise preventing such work from receiving a fair assessment;
2. Altering any school form, record, or document, or forging the signature of any staff member or parent/guardian

#### **OBSTRUCTIONISM**

1. Interfering with, or attempting to interfere with, the access of others to computer systems, or tampering in any way with the integrity of the school's computer system or violating the district's technology Acceptable Use Policy.
2. Interfering with, or attempting to interfere with, the fair and equal access of others to the use of the school library-media center or other academic resources

Consequence: If a student violates the Academic Integrity guidelines the following penalties will be applied:

#### **CHEATING & PLAGIARISM**

1. The student(s) will receive no credit (zero) for the assignment;
2. A disciplinary consequence will be assigned for the inappropriate behavior. Student's parent/guardian will be notified.

3. In addition, school service and/or non-academic probation may be required as membership of a school club/activity. Non-academic probation is the permanent or temporary exclusion from holding or running for an elected or appointed office in any organization or activity associated with PHS, in-eligibility to participate in any athletic or other activity representing the school, and ineligibility to serve as a working member of any student organization.

#### **SABOTAGE & OBSTRUCTION**

1. The Principal or Assistant Principal will issue a consequence.

#### **Reporting A Violation:**

All faculty shall report violations of the Academic Integrity guidelines to the administration in writing. Teachers will note the disciplinary action they have taken as a result of the violation. This notification will serve to track repetitive violations and will provide for administrative intervention as needed.

#### **Responsibilities:**

A student may be placed on Academic Probation when s/he earns a failing grade (64% or less) in any marking period. During a period of Academic Probation, the student's participation in school-based extracurricular activities is restricted so that the student can focus on fulfilling academic requirements. Academic Probation begins when grades are issued at the end of a marking period. Academic Probation status persists through the quarter until the next officially issued progress report or report card. When the student has earned all passing grades (65% or higher) that have been officially reported, the Academic Probation status is lifted. 12 Interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities are governed by rules and regulations administered by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (M.I.A.A.) Academic eligibility for participation in athletics is set forth in these regulations.

If a member of the National Honor Society, the student will be removed and given the opportunity to appeal.

#### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The atmosphere of a school is a reflection of the attitude of its students and staff toward the school and toward each other. Palmer Public Schools is committed to providing and maintaining a safe, respectful and orderly learning environment. The school's Code of Conduct provides a guideline for behavior. No student may interfere with the right of any other student to his/her education.

Disciplinary measures will be used when a student does not respect the rights of classmates, staff, or persons in the educational system; or demonstrates an inability or unwillingness to abide by school regulations and policies. Palmer High School utilizes a progressive discipline model, based on increasing consequences and parental involvement. Some offenses may be so egregious that maximum consequences may be administered with a first offense. The violations and discipline listed below are examples of violations and discipline and are not meant to be all inclusive. Administration retains the discretion to increase or decrease the amount and/or length of the discipline based on mitigating factors and the severity of the offense.

Students may be excluded from activities/trips as well as graduation as a result of disciplinary infraction(s) or threat to disrupt these events, as well as failure to satisfy school-related financial obligations, or outstanding disciplinary obligations.

Disciplinary action may consist of after school obligations, administrative detention, suspension, expulsion, preventive counseling, and/or legal consequences. Minor violations may result in detention being assigned by



teachers or administrators. Students are reminded that detention sessions are an obligation that must be met when assigned. Students will report to the teacher or detention room promptly at the close of school and will remain in the detention session until said time. Students must serve within a forty-eight hour period from issuance of detention. Detention takes precedence over work schedules or co-curricular activities. Teacher detentions take precedence over Office Detentions. Students who fail to serve detention will be subject to further disciplinary action.

Administration has the right to determine that students will not be allowed to attend field trips based upon their behavioral and/or disciplinary record during the school year. In the event a student is not allowed to attend a field trip, the student will be provided with alternative instruction.

The Palmer Public Schools has a *Memorandum of Understanding* with the Palmer Police Department and the Hampden County District Attorney's Office in which there is daily communication with the School Resource Officer based on student issues. Please see the district website for a full memorandum.

### **PALMER HIGH SCHOOL Classroom Discipline - Category 1**

Teachers are responsible for establishing standards of conduct and maintaining discipline within the classroom. They are encouraged to consult with school resource personnel, including school counselors, administrators and nurses. Whenever possible, discipline will remain in the classroom and be managed by the teacher. Classroom detention(s) may be issued for disruptive behaviors and offenses which include, but are not limited to:

- tardiness
- eating in the classroom
- being unprepared for activities/assignments
- talking out of turn
- insubordinate behavior
- throwing objects
- computer lab offenses
- inappropriate use of electronic devices (teacher may hold device for the period)
- mask violation

A student will be given 24 hours written notice before he/she must serve the detention. Classroom detentions begin after school for up to one hour at the teacher's discretion. The actual length of detention is determined by the teacher based on the severity of the offense.

Classroom discipline may follow the suggested course of action depending on severity\*:

1. Warning
2. Teacher phone/email call home
3. Teacher detention(s)
4. Administrator notification
5. Parent Conference

\* Steps may be skipped due to severity of offense or frequency of offense.

Computer Lab offenses may include but are not limited to:

- Late to the lab
- Printing without permission and/or printing inappropriate messages or information
- Having any type of food or liquid drink at the computer station
- Typing personal information without prior approval of the instructor

- Using the technology not in relation to the class/lab assignment

## **PALMER HIGH SCHOOL Administrative Discipline - Category 2**

Office Detention is assigned to a student by the administrative team. Reasons include, but are not limited to:

- excessive tardiness
- pass violation
- vandalism
- skipping Teacher Detention
- public display of affection
- use of tobacco products
- misbehavior in school/on school property/at school function
- \* dress code violation
- \* minor vulgarity
- \* failure to return library resource and/or pay fine
- \* bullying (see Bullying Implementation Plan)
- \* skipping class/failure to be in assigned area
- \* repeated mask violation

Administrative discipline may follow the suggested course of action depending on severity\*:

1. Administrator notifies home
2. Office Detention(s)/Other Consequences
3. Further consequences
4. Parent Conference

\* Steps may be skipped due to severity of offense or frequency of offense.

It is understood that, depending on the circumstances involved, any of the above offenses can be considered grounds for suspension from school.

Office Detention is held daily and begins at 1:55 p.m. and ends at 2:55 p.m.

The student is expected to bring school work to the detention period in order to keep him/herself engaged in work and to be quiet.

Disruptive behavior during Office Detention will be reported to the office by the staff in charge of detention, and additional consequences will be issued to include repeating detention(s), counseling, and increased consequences.

No cell phones, food or drink (except water) is allowed in the detention room. Students are not to go to lockers after detention, but are to leave immediately using the front main entrance.

If an emergency exists at home whereby a student is not able to serve a scheduled detention, the parent will request a postponement from the staff member that issued the detention PRIOR to the scheduled detention. Requests to postpone a detention to allow a student to participate in a game, Driver's Ed, or other extracurricular activity will be denied.

### **Removal from Computer Lab**

Reasons for removal from Computer Labs/Network for one or more weeks may include, but are not limited to:

- Repeating of Computer Lab offenses in Category 1
- Altering the desktop by adding personal sites to the home page, bookmarking, adding icons without permission of instructor
- Changing the default settings
- Changing/Damaging the workstation in any way, ex. Cables, keys, domain, etc.
- Sharing and/or using another student's account

- Giving out a personal password to another student; changing passwords
- Other offenses not listed

Network/Computer Lab Infractions will be cumulative. Additional infractions may result in the student's removal from the network for the following lengths of time:

- Students will be removed from the network for the quarter for the third infraction.
- Students will be removed from the network for the semester for the fourth infraction.
- Students will lose network privileges for all classes for the year after the fourth infraction in a school year.

A letter will be sent home informing the parents of the infraction and the consequence, and the letter will become part of the student's record. In addition to the above disciplinary action, students may receive further discipline under the Code of Conduct.

### **PALMER HIGH SCHOOL - External Suspension - Category 3**

#### **Fighting**

Students who are involved in fights on the school grounds will be suspended. These students may also be charged with violating Section 40, Chapter 272 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Administration will follow district policy.

#### **Weapons**

Weapons of any type are strictly forbidden. Students seen carrying such may be subject to expulsion under M.G.L. c. 71, Sec. 37H, and such items will be confiscated. Administration will follow district policy.

#### **Major School Disruption**

Major school disruptions are prohibited. A major school disruption includes intent to participate in or engage in any activity which substantially or materially disrupts or could disrupt the school operation and/or endangers the health, safety, or security of others. Setting a false fire alarm, making a bomb threat, sit-ins, or the misuse of the emergency 911 telephone number are examples of a major school disruption. Students who are involved in major school disruptions may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with this Handbook.

**Short-term suspensions may not be appealed.**

### **Palmer High School Protocol for Breathalyzer Testing**

#### **ALCOHOL USE BY STUDENTS - District Policy**

In view of the fact that the use of alcohol can endanger the health and safety of the user, and recognizing the deleterious effect the use of alcoholic beverages can have on the maintenance of general order and discipline, the School Committee prohibits the use of, serving of, or consumption of any alcoholic beverage on school property or at any school function. Additionally, any student, regardless of age, who has been drinking alcoholic beverages prior to attendance at, or participation in, a school-sponsored activity, may be barred from that activity and subject to disciplinary action. In order to safeguard the individual and general welfare of all students, the Palmer Public Schools may administer a breathalyzer test as a condition of admission for any school-related activity to any student or his guests. It may also administer such a test at any time throughout the activity to any student at the discretion of the staff member in charge of the activity. Students who refuse to take a breathalyzer test may be removed from the activity and released to a parent. Refusal to take the test

will be viewed as an admission of being under the influence of drugs, alcohol or a controlled substance. The school will impose appropriate disciplinary action.

**Seat belt Use Guidelines for Palmer High School Students**

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 90, Section 13A requires seat belts to be used by all persons at all times when operating or riding as a passenger in a private passenger motor vehicle. Students who drive to and from Palmer High School are expected to abide by this law, wearing their seatbelts on school grounds. Students are also expected to require other student passengers in his/her vehicle to wear their seatbelts. School administration reserves the right to suspend or revoke a student's parking permit upon violation of this policy. Refer to the parking permit application for specific disciplinary actions for first and subsequent offenders of this policy.