

# Be Amazing!



***2021-2022  
Handbook  
For  
Students  
and  
Families***

Morningside Community School  
100 Burbank St.  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
Phone: (413) 448-9690  
Fax: (413) 443-8907

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### 2021-2022 Important Dates

<b>August 30</b>	Meet the Teacher Popsicle Event	<b>March 4</b>	Half Day of School
<b>August 31</b>	Kindergarten Orientation	<b>March 11</b>	Report Cards
<b>September 1</b>	First Day of School 1-5, Prek	<b>April 2</b>	Good Friday
<b>September 8</b>	First Day of School Kindergarten	<b>April 8</b>	Half Day of School
<b>September 17</b>	Half Day of School	<b>April 15</b>	Good Friday-Spring Recess
<b>October 1</b>	Half Day of School	<b>April 25</b>	School Resumes
<b>October 15</b>	Progress Reports	<b>April 29</b>	Progress Reports
<b>October 11</b>	Indigenous Peoples' Day	<b>May 6</b>	Half Day of School
<b>October 29</b>	Half Day of School	<b>May 30</b>	Memorial Day
<b>November 2</b>	No School Students/PD Staff	<b>June 16</b>	Report Cards
<b>November 11</b>	Veterans Day Observed	<b>June 16</b>	Half Day of School
<b>November 24</b>	Thanksgiving Recess Begins	<b>June 16</b>	Last Day of School
<b>November 29</b>	School Resumes	<b>June 20</b>	Juneteenth Observed
<b>December 3</b>	Report Cards		
<b>December 3</b>	Half Day of School		
<b>December 9</b>	Parent/Guardian Conferences		
<b>December 10</b>	Parent/Guardian Conferences		
<b>December 23</b>	Holiday Recess Begins		
<b>January 3</b>	School Resumes		
<b>January 14</b>	Half Day of School		
<b>January 17</b>	Martin Luther King Jr Day		
<b>January 21</b>	Progress Reports		
<b>February 11</b>	Half Day of School		
<b>February 21</b>	Winter Break Begins		
<b>February 28</b>	School Resumes		

*Dear Parents and Guardians,*

*Please let me welcome you to Morningside Community School. It is my hope that you and your child(ren) will have a rewarding experience as a Morningside Meerkat. In order for school to be a place for children to learn and grow, it is essential to create an environment of mutual respect. We want school to be a place to experience the excitement of learning, a place where our students, parents and school staff form a collective partnership. Working together, there is no limit to what our community can achieve.*

*This parent/student handbook is only the introduction to your child's school program. It contains essential information that can provide you with specific answers about our school practices and procedures. This handbook should also be used in conjunction with the Pittsfield Public Schools' Policy Handbook, which contains information that applies to all schools across the district. After reviewing it for general information, I encourage all parents and students to become actively involved in the Morningside experience. Best wishes for an exciting and rewarding school year*

*I look forward to working together to provide our children with the most meaningful educational experience.*

*Mrs. Zanin*

### **Mission Statement**

Morningside Community School pledges to provide each student with options for life by fostering and supporting a collaborative learning environment. In our school, all children will be challenged to reach their full academic and social potential while celebrating their diversity and respecting their family identity.

### **Instructional Focus**

Students will be able to reason through, explain, and justify their OWN thinking through classroom discourse and visible learning.

Morningside Community School is committed to having all students show measurable growth in their ability to formulate oral and written responses that demonstrate comprehension and problem solving skills. This is implemented across the curriculum through a common set of instructional practices and assessments. We measure students' growth through the use of FastBridge, Math and ELA Open Response Benchmarks, MCAS, and school-generated rubrics for written and oral language based on the Common Core Standards. Morningside Community School promotes the learning and growth of all students through effective partnerships with families, caregivers, community members, and organizations as well as promotes the learning and growth of all students through ethical, culturally proficient, skilled, and collaborative practice.

Morningside Community School practices MOTIVATION, CHARACTER AND SAFETY in all that we do. We offer rigorous academic and social emotional learning in all of our classrooms from Pre-K to grade 5. In order to sustain and improve this educational excellence, our school is compelled to consistently change in order to meet the ever-shifting needs of students and staff and the world beyond the classroom. Morningside Community School is a school and learning community that functions with cohesive and unified goals. Our belief is that through communication, meaningfully focused collaboration, and significant contribution, we can work to create an effective, safe, and nurturing learning environment for all students, while maintaining our focus on student achievement.

## **Morningside Daily Schedule**

### **LEARNING SCHEDULE:**

8:15 a.m.- Doors open and breakfast begins for all students

8:30a.m. - Students enter their classrooms

8:45a.m. - Instructional day begins

2:40p.m. - No student dismissals after this time

3:05p.m. - Pre-K dismissed from Kindergarten wing

3:10p.m. - Kindergarten and Grade 1 dismissed. Students released from Kindergarten wing.

3:12p.m. - Grades 2 and 4 dismissed. Car pick-ups released from gym door to car line. All other students released from front door.

3:14p.m. - Grades 3 and 5 dismissed. Car pick-ups released from gym door to car line. All other students released from front door.

**When inclement weather occurs (raining, snowing hard, or below 20 degrees with the wind chill factor) all students will enter through the front doors to eat breakfast or wait inside until class entry at 8:30a.m.**

## **School Administration**

Monica Zanin <b>Principal</b> mzanin@pittsfield.net	Heather Alston <b>Dean of Students</b> halston@pittsfield.net	Kristen Palatt <b>Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning</b> kpalatt@pittsfield.net
Amanda Waluszko <b>School Adjustment Counselor</b> awaluszko@pittsfield.net	<b>School Psychologist</b>	Tammy Barry <b>School Nurse</b> tbarry@pittsfield.net
Claire Tyskanella <b>Secretary</b> ctyskanella@pittsfield.net	Chris Bona <b>Secretary</b> cbona@pittsfield.net	

## **Central Administration**

Joseph Curtis <b>Superintendent of Schools</b>	<b>Deputy Superintendent</b>
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499-9512	499-9510
Lovelynnne Pierre <b>Human Resources Director</b> 499-9505	Kristen Behnke <b>Budget and Finance Manager</b> 499-9502
Judy Rush <b>Title I Coordinator</b> 499-9523	Jennifer Stokes <b>Special Education Director</b> 499-9515

Morningside Community School's  
Business Partner is

Berkshire Bank



### **Morningside Staff**

<b>Administrative Team</b>	<b>SCHOOL ADDRESS &amp; PHONE/FAX NOS.</b>
Monica Zanin – Principal	Morningside Community School
Kristen Palatt – Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning	100 Burbank Street
Heather Alston – Dean of Students	Pittsfield, MA 01201
Chris Bona – Secretary	Phone: (413) 448 - 9690
Claire Tyskanella – Secretary	FAX: (413) 443-9807
Tammy Barry – School Nurse	<b>Website:</b> morningside.pittsfield.net
Amanda Waluszko– School Adjustment Counselor	<b>School Colors:</b> Maroon/White <b>Mascot:</b> Meerkat
– School Psychologist	<b>Grade 4</b>
Tatiana Guity- Registered Behavior Technician	Rebecca Nicholson
Serina Saunders – Registered Behavior Technician	Kristen Trimble
	Emily Marcella
<b>Pre - Kindergarten</b>	
Rachel McCann/Gail McGivern (Assistant)	<b>Grade 5</b>
Kim Pemble	Lisa Wilmot
<b>Kindergarten</b>	Carly Daniels
Tanya Silvestro-Dias/Carrie Schrage (Assistant)	Kaytlin Barcus
Mary Slater/Mary Beth Verchot (Assistant)	-
Lisa Pope/Mary Fructerman (Assistant)	
Stephanie Burt/ TBD (Assistant)	

<b>Grade 1</b>	
Morgan Butler	
Hayley Gingras	
Danielle Oldread	
Gina Wagner	
	<b>Grade Science</b>
<b>Grade 2</b>	Susan Garcia
Samantha Lincoln	
Samantha Boyle	
Jacqueline Martin	
Carole Somerville	
<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Classroom Specialists</b>
Kellee Quinn	Amanda Hartlage – Art
Jodi Roberts Perrone	Renee Clark– Math/Technology
Kelly Vosburgh	Jennifer Teichert – Music
	Alex Walsh – Physical Education
	Juliet Wright – Strings Instructor
<b>Special Education</b>	
Kimberly Scott- Special Education Teacher	
Amy Jones – Special Education Teacher	<b>Assistant Teachers &amp; Paraprofessionals</b>
	Kecia Walls
	Patricia Trotti
	Stephanie Johnston
<b>Support Specialists</b>	Swastika Sengupta
Julie Swanson -Literacy Coach	Shayne Turnage
Natalie Stracuzzi- Reading Interventionist	Keely Baker
Gert Randisi – Reading Interventionist	TBD
Alissa Rosier – ELL Teacher	TBD
Olivia Oberle -ELL Teacher	TBD
Billie Lamoureaux- Math Interventionist	TBD
<b>Related Service Providers</b>	
Christina Gordon – Speech and Language Pathologist	<b>Custodial Staff</b>
Emily Ryan – Occupational Therapist	Anthony Kennedy – Head Custodian
Heather Benlien – Occupational Therapist	Charles Smith – Evening Custodian
Patty Boyle – Cafeteria Manager	Jason Pemble– Evening Custodian

## **Absences & Attendance**

Coming to school every day is very important to learning. It's also important that your child get to school **on time** each day.

If your child is absent from school, we ask that a parent or guardian call the school before school starts (448-9690) to inform us of the absence. We will need the following information (which may be left on the school's answering machine if the absence is called in before the office is open):

- Child's name
- Child's teacher
- The reason for the absence

Please note that the absence will be recorded as "excused" only if the reason for absence is:

- Illness or injury that prevents the student from coming to school. A health care provider, school nurse, or parent/guardian must verify the illness or injury.
- Death in the family (parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin) or other significant personal family crisis
- Medical or psychological tests during the school day. The parent/guardian must show evidence (such as a note from a health center) that the tests could not be scheduled after school.
- Specified Religious Holidays
- Required Court Appearances
- Medical or psychological tests during the school day
- Other extraordinary situations approved by the school principal

**You must bring in a note after each day your child is absent.** The note must include: the date absent, the reason for the absence, a phone number where a parent or guardian can be reached, and the parent or guardian's signature.

We encourage families to schedule dental, physical, and other appointments during non-school hours, whenever possible. The scheduling of family vacations during times when school is in session is discouraged and will be marked as an unexcused absence. Teachers are not required to prepare work for students who miss school because of a family vacation.

Students are expected to make up all work missed during their absence. They should check with their teachers on the day they come back to school to find out what work is to be made up.

### **Unexcused Absences:**

Here are a few examples of absences that are **unexcused**, even if the parent/guardian sends in a note:

- Repetitive and chronic absence due to illness or injury. In these cases, the parent/guardian must submit a letter from a health care provider verifying that the student was too sick or injured to go to school
- Student needed to babysit
- Family vacation
- Extension of a religious or cultural holiday beyond the designated day or days.

Whenever possible, parents should check with the principal before allowing a child to miss school if they are not sure the absence will be excused. The school does not have to help a student makeup work due to unexcused absences.



After five days of unexcused absences during the school year, your family may be required to attend a conference with the Dean of Students to discuss the issues affecting attendance and to make a plan for improved attendance. If attendance does not improve, the school district's attendance officer will be notified of the record of excessive absences.

### Tardiness

A student is tardy if he/she arrives at school late (after the 8:45 a.m.), without an excused reason. In cases of patterns of regular or excessive tardiness, the child's parent/guardian will be required to attend a meeting with school administration or designee.

### Dismissal (Early)

Every effort is made to minimize classroom disruption. Please help us with the following guidelines:

If your child needs to be dismissed before 2:40, a note must be sent into school in the morning. **No child will be allowed to be dismissed after 2:40 p.m.** All dismissals must occur before 2:40 p.m. The end of the day is a hectic time for teachers and students.

(Please refer to the Pittsfield Public Schools Policy Handbook (STU -6) for a more detailed list of excused and unexcused absences and for elaboration on all Pittsfield Public Schools attendance policies.)

## **After School Programming**

Morningside Community School has received a 21st Century Grant for after school programming. This programming will run Monday through Thursday from 3:15-5:30 p.m. Registration for this programming will be sent home in early September 2020.

Remote Time Period:

[21st Century After School Program](#)

## **Allergies~ Severe and Life Threatening Allergy Policy**

Some students may have severe and life threatening allergies. Please inform the school nurse if your child has allergies. A "nut free" table and chairs, for certain students, is located in the cafeteria. These students can select friends with a school purchased lunch to join them. Designated allergen free tables will also be assigned in all classrooms during snack time.

## **Bullying**

The Pittsfield Public Schools developed and adopted an Anti-Bullying policy (STU-80 R-4/13/16) that is embedded in district-wide approaches to promoting a positive, pro-social culture for all students and staff, such as the district's School-wide Positive Behavior Support initiative, the Olweus Anti-Bullying Program, and the implementation of school violence prevention curricula, Second Step and Steps to Respect.

## **Bullying Prohibited**

Bullying, including cyberbullying, and retaliation are not acceptable conduct and are prohibited within the Pittsfield Public Schools. Pittsfield Public School leadership and other staff will endeavor to maintain learning and working environments free of bullying. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information is prohibited. Any student who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying or retaliation shall be subject to a range of disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension or expulsion.

This prohibition is in effect in the following locations:

- In the school building and on school grounds
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds
- At a bus stop, on the school bus, or in other school-sanctioned transportation such as another vehicle owned, leased, or used by the school district
- At a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether it takes place on or off school grounds
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased, or used by the school district or school
- At any program or location that is not school-related, or through the use of personal technology or electronic device, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school

## **Definitions of Key Terms**

**Bullying:** The repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property; creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school; or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying includes cyber-bullying. (Definition based on M.G.L. c.71, 37O as amended by section 74 of Chapter 38 of the acts of 2013)

**Cyberbullying:** Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. (Definition based on M.G.L. c.71, 37O)

**Aggressor:** A student or a member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

**Target:** A student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is directed.

**Retaliation:** 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.

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

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

### **Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others**

The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor **solely** on the basis of an anonymous report. Anonymous reports can be made by email to [bullying@pittsfield.net](mailto:bullying@pittsfield.net) or through a link in the “Family and Community” portion of the district website. Reports filed in this fashion will go to a dedicated email account that will be regularly reviewed. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report or may report orally. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the principal or designee. A student who knowingly makes a false allegation of bullying or retaliation shall also be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Notification of Bullying Requirements**

#### Notice to Parents or Guardians

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

#### Notice to Another School or District

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, nonpublic school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

#### Notice to Law Enforcement

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable expectation that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the district’s Anti-Bullying Policy and state and federal policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals and organizations such as the Pittsfield Police Department and the District Attorney’s Office, as the principal or designee deems appropriate.”

## **Responses to Bullying**

### Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal or his/her designee's determination that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the school will use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. [M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v)] Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students in consultation with guidance and/or school adjustment counselors and other appropriate school personnel
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals
- Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home
- Developing individual behavioral plans to include a focus on specific social skill development
- Making a referral for counseling or other mental health services for targets, aggressors, and family members.

### Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the District's and School's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act" (IDEA) and state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

### Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

Any school staff member who witnesses possible bullying should immediately intervene and stop the possible bullying at that moment, as well as subsequently report suspected bullying behavior to the principal or designee when further investigation is warranted.

The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well.

Supportive services will be offered to the target. These services may include safety planning, school adjustment counselor services, and a mental health referral.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

The full text of the Pittsfield Public Schools Anti-Bullying Policy is available at [www.pittsfield.net](http://www.pittsfield.net). Questions regarding the district plan for the prevention of bullying can be directed to Ann Marie Carpenter at 413-499-9515 or [acarpenter@pittsfield.net](mailto:acarpenter@pittsfield.net).

### **Problem Resolution**

The principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

District students and/or parents of students may contact the Superintendent or designee as a result of a concern about resolution of a finding at the individual building level at 413-499-9512.

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3700.

(Please refer to the Pittsfield Public Schools Policy Handbook for a more detailed explanation of Pittsfield's Anti-Bullying Policy (STU-80).)

### **Bus Transportation**

The driver is in charge of the bus and all students while they are riding to and from school. The bus driver can assign students to specific seats if needed. Students are required to follow all bus rules so that the bus ride is safe at all times.

Paid bus transportation is available for families who live beyond the eligible busing distance. Information regarding this policy may be obtained at the Transportation Office by telephoning **499-9525** or on the Pittsfield Public Schools website. All families of students who ride the bus to and from school will be sent a copy of bus rules directly from the transportation office. You are required to sign this contract of rules and return it to school as soon as possible after receiving it. Riding the bus is a privilege and repeated infractions of these rules may result in a bus suspension. For more details about bus eligibility and bus rules, please see the Pittsfield Public Schools Policy Handbook.

### **Student Expectations on the Bus**

We expect all students to show they are kind and caring when they ride the bus to and from school each day. These can be happy, safe times when all students cooperate by remembering the following bus rules:

- Help us keep our morning bus schedule by being at your bus stop when the bus arrives.
- Remain seated while the bus is moving and keep your feet out of the aisle. When the bus stops, you may change seats, only with the permission of the driver.
- Never use bad language, never tease, never shout or yell.
- Keep food and pets off the bus.
- Avoid distracting the drivers by talking to them while they're driving.
- Never throw objects that can hurt others or distract the driver.
- Never put arms or head out the bus windows at any time.

- Don't open windows unless the driver gives permission.
- Respect the bus by keeping it free of litter, and by not damaging its seat cushions or other equipment.
- Avoid crowding or pushing other students when entering the bus.
- Enter and leave the bus only by the front door except in case of emergency.
- When leaving the bus, do not cross in front of the bus until the bus driver tells you it's okay.

The bus driver will report a student who does not follow these rules to the Dean of Students. After speaking with the student, the Dean may call the parent/guardian to discuss the problem and the student's consequence. Students who fail to follow the bus rules may be forbidden from riding the bus for a period of time. If this happens, the student's family will be responsible for getting the student to school on time and picked up at the end of the day.

## **Cafeteria/Breakfast & Lunch**

### **School Meals**

Morningside Community School will be participating in Community Eligibility Provision. Under Community Eligibility Provision only full meals can be considered as a no charge meal.

- Each student may receive one free breakfast and one free lunch per school day.
- Students who arrive late to school will receive a bagged breakfast to bring to class
- Students who wish to buy 1 or 2 food items or an additional meal must have funds at hand: either cash or sufficient positive balance on their meal account.
- No charging of additional meals or food items will be allowed.
- Parents can access [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) to fund meal accounts.

### **Cafeteria Expectations**

- Enter and leave the cafeteria quietly.
- Follow the rules that are posted in the cafeteria.
- Remain in line in your assigned spot.
- Get an adult's permission before leaving the cafeteria and be sure to take a pass and sign out.
- Help to keep all tables and floor areas clean.
- Food remains in the cafeteria.
- Only the lavatories next to the cafeteria are to be used during lunch.
- Lunch is a great time to spend time with your friends. Help us to make this time enjoyable and safe for everyone by using "inside voices" and showing that you have good manners.
- School lunch menus are sent home each month.
- Allergy tables are available in the cafeteria for anyone who has a nut allergy. Please do not sit at the table if you do not have an allergy.
- For safety reasons, we request that if students bring beverages to school, they transport them in non-breakable containers.
- The District Allergy Policy does not permit food in any classrooms. "Food Zones" are labeled accordingly. Everyone must cleanse their hands after eating.

Breakfast and lunch will be provided to all students at no charge. As always, students are welcome to bring lunch from home. **Students who consistently have difficulty following rules may be asked to sit at a different table, or may be assigned to eat in a designated area. All students may be assigned to specific tables or seats at lunch if this is determined necessary for reasonable behavior expectations and lunch room management.**

## **Cancellation/Emergency Closings/Delayed Dismissals**

If school must be closed early or opened late for any reason, if buses are delayed, or if school is closed, your family will receive a phone call from our ConnectEd messenger service. It is very important that we always have the correct phone number in our records. Local radio stations also announce school closings.

## **Canvas**

[Click here for info on Accessing Canvas](#)

## **Cell Phone Policy**

Students may possess cell phones on school grounds and at school-sponsored or school-related events or activities; it is expected that students shall keep phones turned off, stored away and shall not use or operate these during the instructional day, or at any other time during any school-sponsored activity or program.

No cell phones or other kind of portable electronic device shall be used at any time during or in conjunction with any school-sponsored activity for the purpose of, or in a manner that facilitates cheating, sexual or other harassment or discrimination, bullying or demeaning acts, violation of any person's privacy, interference with or disruption of any Pittsfield Public Schools activity, violation of a criminal or other statute, or otherwise in a manner that violates a Pittsfield Public Schools policy or rule of conduct for students.

A student who violates the restrictions set forth above on the use of cell phones may face disciplinary actions.

School officials, including classroom teachers, may confiscate a cell phone that is used by a student in violation of the restrictions set forth in this policy. The student's parent or guardian shall be notified of the infraction and advised that he/she may claim the confiscated device at the school.



## **Classroom Celebrations**

In accordance with the district's wellness policy, cakes, cupcakes, and sugary juices can no longer be brought in from home for student birthday parties. Once a month, the school cafeteria prepares a special cake to celebrate that month's birthdays. This special treat is in accordance with FDA regulations.

Candy and other sweets will not be brought to school by families or students to be distributed during the school day. This includes, but is not limited to, Halloween and Valentine's Day.

At no time, can home-prepared goodies be brought to school for sharing within the classroom or school. Only pre-packaged store bought items can be brought into school at the principal's discretion in accordance with the school district's wellness policy.


## **Code of Conduct: Insert paragraph from Ann Marie**

### ***Positive Behavior Support***

Morningside Community School actively participates in the district-wide Positive Behavior Support initiative. This is a method of teaching whereby children learn how to care about themselves, their friends and their classmates by role-playing situations and practicing positive behavior. They are taught what behaviors are expected of them and are held to the standards in their classrooms and all areas of the school. Students have many opportunities to model and practice appropriate behaviors throughout the year. Students learn and practice positive ways to respond to others. All children at Morningside are expected to follow the MCS guiding principles of Motivation, Character, and Safety in the hallways, playground, cafeteria and classroom.

The ultimate goal is for the students to take ownership of these behaviors so that they will demonstrate these behaviors whenever or wherever they are at Morningside Community School.

Students receive the ticket below for demonstrating our school expectations, MOTIVATION, CHARACTER, and SAFETY. Weekly recognition grade level meetings and rewards are provided to students that have received these recognition tickets. (New Meerkat Ticket below)

	<p><b>MOTIVATION: Work hard and do your best</b>  <b>CHARACTER: Be kind to others</b>  <b>SAFETY: Hands and feet to yourself</b></p>
<p><b>NAME:</b> _____</p>	

### **Motivation, Character, and Safety Are for Everyone**

In an effort to maintain a positive working environment for staff and students, the theme of Motivation, Character, and Safety was adopted to structure expectations within the building. Motivation, Character, and Safety are the broad expectations we expect the students to follow in order to create and maintain a positive learning environment at Morningside School. An additional component of Positive Behavior Support recognizes that for a school to be successful the staff should also agree to expectations. Therefore, the PBS team thought it beneficial to create staff norms/expectations to refer to throughout the year in an effort to keep on track and preserve a positive working environment.



## **MOTIVATION, CHARACTER & SAFETY**

At Morningside Community School

<p><b><u>PLAYGROUND</u></b></p> <p><b>Motivation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take turns on the equipment</li> <li>• Line up carefully</li> <li>• Follow adult directions</li> </ul> <p><b>Character:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include everyone in play</li> <li>• Use a calm tone of voice to solve problems</li> <li>• Keep grounds and equipment clean</li> </ul> <p><b>Safety:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk on the wood chips and equipment</li> <li>• Keep hands and feet to yourself</li> <li>• Find an adult if someone is hurt</li> <li>• Student supplies stay in the quad</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>TRANSITIONS</u></b></p> <p><b>Motivation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow directions the first time</li> <li>• Walk to the right</li> <li>• Quiet during location changes</li> </ul> <p><b>Character:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold the doors for others</li> <li>• Keep things clean and in their place</li> <li>• Enjoy displays and surroundings with eyes only</li> </ul> <p><b>Safety:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Line up carefully and quietly</li> <li>• Keep hands and feet to yourself</li> <li>• Maintain personal space between you and the people around you</li> <li>• Student supplies stay in the quad</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>CAFETERIA</u></b></p> <p><b>Motivation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow adult directions</li> <li>• Use quiet voices</li> <li>• Say please and thank you</li> <li>• Ask for permission when you need to get up</li> </ul> <p><b>Character:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include others at the table in your friendly table talk</li> <li>• Keep quiet conversations at your own table</li> <li>• Maintain a clean and healthy environment in all areas</li> <li>• Enjoy cafeteria displays with eyes only</li> </ul> <p><b>Safety:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay seated with hands to self until dismissed</li> <li>• Respond to the signal (1 chime=5 minute warning, 2 chimes=prepare to line up)</li> <li>• Line up carefully and quietly when called</li> <li>• Student supplies stay in the quad</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>CLASSROOM</u></b></p> <p><b>Motivation:</b></p> <p>Be polite, respectful, and understanding</p> <p><b>Character:</b></p> <p>Follow your own path with courage, compassion, and honesty</p> <p><b>Safety:</b></p> <p>Feel free from physical danger, bullying, and verbal abuse</p> <p><b>Work Hard! Be Nice!</b></p> <p>Staff should refer to grade level character plans to roll out classroom expectations throughout the year.</p>

## **Core Academics at Morningside Community School**

### **Reading and Literacy**

Morningside Community School is committed to the belief that all students can learn to read. We have created a tiered framework to address the literacy needs of all our students. MCS provides students with a minimum of two-hours of uninterrupted literacy instruction daily. The literacy block is structured to provide for reading and writing instruction with time devoted to whole group as well as differentiated, small group instruction. Whole group instruction typically focuses on vocabulary and comprehension while small group instruction focuses on applying skills to reading and writing.

HMH Into Reading is our core reading program - providing instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and writing. All students receive instruction in the core program. Into Reading also provides support for tiered small group instruction - advanced instruction, on-grade level instruction and strategic instruction.

To address the needs of our diverse learners, additional programs are used as needed to supplement the core program. The following programs may be used to provide varying tiers of instruction:

- Read Naturally provides additional instruction in fluency and comprehension.
- Reading Mastery provides another tier of explicit reading instruction for our struggling first through third graders
- Corrective Reading supports the fluency and comprehension needs of our struggling fourth and fifth graders.
- Direct Instruction

For students who exhibit reading proficiency, enrichment and extension activities are provided beyond the core instruction. Such activities include literature circles to discuss chapter books, special activities and projects, and computer-based research.

Each grade level encourages nightly recreational reading to promote oral reading fluency and comprehension.

The reading fluency of all Morningside students is assessed three times per year. Families are mailed the results of this testing along with suggestions to improve student fluency and comprehension.

Literacy instruction is supported by a full time Reading Coach, Kimberly Scott.

## **Mathematics**

Morningside Community School utilizes Go Math! by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for mathematics instruction. This math program builds a strong sense of numbers in the primary grades that helps the students achieve greater success in algebra and geometry later on. Students are encouraged to investigate and explore math while explaining their thinking. Many strategies are incorporated so that students learn different ways to solve problems. Go Math! allows children to develop deep conceptual understanding, and then practice, apply, and discuss what they know with skill and confidence.

Students at Morningside Community School have 90 minutes per day of math instruction. The routine typically is broken into three components. The first 30 minutes are focused on review of homework, daily math routines, and introduction of new concepts. The next 30 minutes are devoted to small group exploration of new material and skill practice. The final 30 minutes are for reinforcement or expansion of skills based on what each student needs. Mathematics instruction at Morningside is guided by regular performance assessments.

## **Damaged or Lost Books and/or School Property**

If your child loses or damages books or other school property, you will be responsible for paying for a new book or fixing the property that was damaged. We ask that students show that they respect the school's property by taking care of any school materials or equipment they use.

## **Dress Code**

Personal appearance is an individual matter. No one, however, has the privilege of disregarding the norms of reasonable dress. Attire that could interfere with the learning process is not allowed. Students will be counseled on an individual basis if their attire is improper. Parents will be contacted if there is a question regarding a student's attire. Clothing must always conform to safety standards of the particular class. Hats can only be worn in school on special days.

SNOW BOOTS: Students are asked to bring a pair of sneakers or shoes to wear in school when boots are worn to school.

TOPS: Spaghetti straps, crop tops, halter tops, and net football shirts are not considered appropriate for school. T-shirts that have inappropriate pictures or language displayed on them are not acceptable.

Please refer to the District Handbook for specifics regarding dress code.

## **District Sexual Harassment Policy**

A copy of the district's Sexual Harassment policy is available on the Morningside Community School's website. If you would like a paper copy of this policy, please contact the school's main office at 413-448-9690

## **DISCIPLINE OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS (Special Needs Includes both Special Education and Section 504 Students)**

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook.

Procedure: Procedures for suspension of students with disabilities when suspensions exceed 10 consecutive school days or a pattern has developed for suspensions exceeding 10 cumulative days; responsibilities of the Team; responsibilities of the district

1. A suspension of longer than 10 consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than 10 consecutive days but constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement
2. When a suspension constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, district personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team, as determined by the parent and the district, convene within 10 days of the decision to suspend to review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information from the parents, to determine

whether the behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability or was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP—"a manifestation determination."

3. If district personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the suspension or expulsion may go forward consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except that the district must still offer:
  - a. services to enable the student, although in another setting, to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward IEP goals; and
  - b. as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, to address the behavior so that it does not recur.
4. Interim alternative educational setting. Regardless of the manifestation determination, the district may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (as determined by the Team) for up to 45 school days
  - a. on its own authority if the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance or the infliction of serious bodily injury on another person while at school or a school function or, considered case by case, unique circumstances; or
  - b. on the authority of a hearing officer if the officer orders the alternative placement after the district provides evidence that the student is "substantially likely" to injure him/herself or others.
  - c. Characteristics In either case, the interim alternative education setting enables the student to continue in the general curriculum and to continue receiving services identified on the IEP, and provides services to address the problem behavior.
5. If district personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, then the Team completes a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan if it has not already done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the Team reviews and modifies it, as necessary, to address the behavior. Except when he or she has been placed in an interim alternative educational setting in accordance with part 4, the student returns to the original placement unless the parents and district agree otherwise or the hearing officer orders a new placement.
6. Not later than the date of the decision to take disciplinary action, the school district notifies the parents of that decision and provides them with the written notice of procedural safeguards. If the parent chooses to appeal or the school district requests a hearing because it believes that maintaining the student's current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, the student remains in the disciplinary placement, if any, until the decision of the hearing officer or the end of the time period for the disciplinary action, whichever comes first, unless the parent and the school district agree otherwise.

State Requirements Federal Requirements 34 CFR 300.530-537

For a discipline flow chart, see [http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/IDEA2004/spr\\_meetings/disc\\_chart.doc](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/IDEA2004/spr_meetings/disc_chart.doc).

## **Email**

E-mail is an efficient means for communication and is a wonderful tool for general information and quick answers. **Confidentiality is always a priority and therefore email may not always be the most appropriate method of communication for certain situations.** You may always call to speak with a Morningside staff member employee or he/she may choose to respond with a phone call.

All staff members have a PPS e-mail account. Most email addresses follow this format: the first initial of their first name, last name @pittsfield.net; ex., mzanin@pittsfield.net. Staff is asked to check their emails daily and respond to parent questions within a timely manner.

Morningside School is committed to open and ongoing communication with families and the community. Email is an efficient means to this end. Please be aware that employees may not always have immediate access to their e-mail and messages may be inadvertently blocked by our spam filter. As always, you may call by phone to speak with an Morningside employee. Finally, please note that email may not be monitored when school is not in session.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Each quarter we have a fire drill so we can practice leaving the building in case of an emergency. These are just practices. Your child's teachers will know exactly what to do when we have a fire drill. Tell your child to pay attention to teachers when they ask you to line up quietly to exit the building in line without talking, running, or



pushing. Once your class is outside the building, stay in line without talking, so your teacher can check to see that all your classmates are with you. When the all-clear signal is given, your teacher will direct you to enter the building in a quiet line. **Failure to follow directions during emergencies or drills will result in disciplinary consequences.**

There will be at least one other time during the year that we will have other practice drills. One is called a "relocation". We practice walking to Morningside Baptist Church in case there was ever a reason we could not remain at Morningside. We also hold three other types of practices called "Lock Down", "Shelter in Place (weather)", "Hold in Passing" and "Drop, Cover, Hold". These are in case there was ever a reason students need to stay in their classrooms.

**Relocation site:** In accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations, Morningside Community School has an emergency relocation plan. In case of an emergency relocation, students will leave the building by way of designated fire exits and then proceed to Tyler Street where they will walk to our designated evacuation site, Morningside Baptist Church.

**Fire drills:** In cooperation with the Pittsfield Fire Department, fire drills are held several times throughout the school year. Each classroom has a designated primary fire exit and an alternate exit.

**For emergency purposes,** it is extremely important that you notify the office of any changes in contact information (i.e. phone numbers, names of emergency contacts).

## **Emergency Forms**

Students will be given emergency forms at the beginning of each school year. It is important that this form be completely filled out and returned promptly. Three adult emergency contacts should be listed other than the parent/guardians. These contacts should be easily accessible in the parent/guardians' absence.

Babysitters, daycare providers, and neighbors should also be listed. **If any change in the information occurs during the school year, please notify the Main Office in writing immediately.**

## **ESSA and TITLE 1 “RIGHT TO KNOW” COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

The Pittsfield Public Schools, in accordance with Title I, hereby informs all parents/guardians that they have the right to know the following information regarding their child’s classroom teacher(s):

- Whether the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grades and subjects he/she teaches
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances
- The teacher’s college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.

The Pittsfield Public Schools, in compliance with federal law, will provide you with the above information in a timely manner, if you request it in writing.

**Pittsfield Public Schools  
Title One Program Home School Compact  
Morningside Community School  
2021 - 2022**

Morningside Community School and the families of the students participating in the activities, services, and programs funded by the Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA) agree that this compact outlines how families, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved students academic achievement and the means by which the school and families will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the State’s high standards.

### **Morningside Community School will strive to:**

- Provide high quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the participating children to meet the State’s student academic achievement standards as follow:
  - Core programs that are aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework
  - Through a formative assessment cycle process that provides both intervention and enrichment
- Hold parent/guardian conferences at least each fall during which this compact will be discussed as it related to the individual child’s achievement.
- Provide families with frequent reports on their children’s progress. Specifically the school will provide report cards at least three times per year & progress reports when needed.
- Provide families reasonable access to staff. Specifically, please email, or phone, the staff to arrange a meeting.

- Provide families opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and to observe classroom activities as follows: parent/teacher organization, School Council, Parent Liaison events, academic celebrations, family nights, to name a few.
- Respect and value the uniqueness of each child and his/her family.

**We, as families, will support out children's learning in the following ways:**

- Monitoring attendance
- Making sure that homework is completed
- Helping my child to read each day
- Volunteering in the school
- Participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to my child's education
- Promoting positive use of my child's extracurricular time
- Staying informed about my child's education and communicating with the school promptly
- Reading all notices from the school or the district
- serving , to the extent possible, on policy advisory groups such as the School Council and district Curriculum Advisory Board
- Assisting my child in the implementation of Morningside's school-wide expectations.

**As a student I will strive to:**

- Show respect for myself, my school, and other people around me
- Work cooperatively with other students and staff
- Do my homework everyday
- Read at least 30 minutes every day outside of school time
- Accept responsibility for my own actions and resolve conflicts peacefully.
- Comply with school expectations: Motivation, Character & Safety
- Seek assistance from my teachers or staff members when I have a problem

**Pittsfield Public Schools: USE OF FACE MASKS**

The Pittsfield Public Schools is committed to providing a safe environment as schools reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread for coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice:

A face mask that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds, and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed. This includes children of all ages. Exceptions to the mask/face covering requirements will be made for those for whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors. If a medical exception is being used, appropriate medical documentation will be required. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances. Parents may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver.

A student's mask is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face mask. Face masks must not display obscene, vulgar, racist, sexist or other offensive pictures, words, or slogans. Any face mask that distracts, disrupts, intimates or provokes can be deemed inappropriate by the principal or designee.

The district will supply a disposable face mask for individuals who arrive at a building or board school transportation, without one.

### **Proper Use of a Mask/Facial Covering**

To properly protect the wearer and other, a mask must:

- Be of medical- grade if disposable OR
- Manufactured with multiple layers of fabric and be washed daily without damage or change to shape
- Cover both nose and mouth allowing for breathing without restriction
- Fit snugly against the skin
- Be put on and removed using the ear loops, without touching the front of the mask
- Not have a one-way valve that allowed unfiltered exhaled air

Face masks will not be required when appropriate social distancing is enforced:

- During scheduled mask breaks
- While eating or drinking
- During physical education classes

The Pittsfield Public Schools will be following the mask requirements set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education stated above. Refusal to wear a face mask or to wear the face covering correctly for non-medical reasons can result in disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Pittsfield Public Schools Code of Conduct, Character, and Support or progressive discipline in the case of staff, as well as removal from the school.

If students are in violation of this policy, the building principal will consult with the parent/ guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate. The student may be subject to an emergency dismissal from school due to a medical safety concern. In some situations, disciplinary responses may result according to the procedures contained in the Student Code of Conduct, Character, and Support.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/ district facility.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Order No. 31 -

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/may-1-2020-masks-and-face-coverings/download>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - Reopening Guidelines

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Mask Up MA!

<https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma>



## **Family Conferences**

Morningside Community School holds family conferences in November. Registrations for the November 21st and 22nd family conferences will be sent home in late October. In order to make your conference a positive experience, we would like to suggest some things to talk with the teacher about.

### **You May Want To Ask The Teacher:**

1. Does my child participate in classroom activities?
2. Does he/ she exhibit self-control in school?
3. How does my child get along with others?
4. Can my child handle the learning materials of his/ her grade?
5. Does he/ she seem to enjoy reading?
6. How does my child read orally?
7. Can my child express thoughts and ideas clearly?
8. How is his/ her written communication?
9. Does he/ she seem happy in school?
10. Is he/ she accepted by the other students?

### **You May Want To Tell The Teacher:**

1. School activities your child talks about at home.
2. What responsibilities your child handles at home.
3. Anything that may affect your child's performance in school.
4. Your child's favorite activities at home.
5. The strengths and weaknesses of your child.

Sharing information with the teacher will enable us to provide the best learning environment for your child.

## **Family Involvement Policy**

Morningside Community School welcomes the participation of parents/guardians in the support of student learning and recognizes that parental involvement increases the opportunities for student success. It is the policy of Morningside Community School to foster and maintain ongoing communications with parents/guardians concerning their opportunities for involvement, their children's eligibility for special programs, their children's educational progress, the professional qualifications of their children's teachers, and the status of their children's school. Morningside Community School shall also provide full opportunities for the participation of parents/guardians with limited English proficiency and other disabilities, including providing information and school reports in a language such parents will understand. Communications with parents/guardians shall, at all times, respect the privacy of the student and their family. Morningside Community School shall involve parents/guardians in the joint development of policies and keep them informed of school reviews and improvements being made.

## **Health Services**

The goal of the School Health Program of Pittsfield Public Schools is to promote, protect, maintain, and improve student health. The school nurse is a health advocate for all students and coordinates the health services of school, home and community. The school nurse implements state laws, local board policies and administrative procedures relative to health services in assigned schools. A registered nurse, Mrs. Barry,

supervises the Nurse's Office. Students who feel ill or are injured in school should report to the nurse after obtaining permission from their teacher.

We want to provide each child with a safe and healthy environment. The nurse should be made aware of any pertinent medical information, i.e., allergies, medications, and/or physical restrictions. Any parent/guardian who has a health related concern should feel free to contact the School Nurse at 448-9690.

An up-to-date immunization record is required for every student. Each student's record is reviewed by the school nurse to ensure compliance with Massachusetts State Law.

All students in the Massachusetts public schools must have the influenza vaccine, and documentation of such to the school, by December 31, 2020. Even students who are participating in the Pittsfield Public Virtual Academy must comply with this requirement. We hope that in the light of COVID-19 that families who have hesitated in the past will please consider getting the seasonal flu vaccine

Students with medical or religious exemptions may be excused from this mandate with appropriate documentation. Students who are on official and approved Home School plans are exempt from this public school requirement.

**Medications** - Massachusetts Law requires that all medication that must be administered during school hours be brought directly to the School Nurse by a parent/guardian. All medication must be in a properly labeled pharmaceutical container. The School Nurse will dispense the medication as directed by the physician. A written order from the doctor and written parent permission must accompany the medication. Long-term medications require a special form to be completed by the physician and parent. This form may be obtained from the School Nurse.

**Medical Exemption from Physical Education** - If physical activities are restricted for a medical reason, a signed note from the doctor or the parent/guardian must be presented to the Health Office. If the exemption is to be for an extended period of time, written documentation must be presented from the physician.

**Health Screening** - All students are scheduled for vision, height, weight, and hearing screenings each year. Fifth grade students are also screened for scoliosis.

**Illness** - If your child feels ill in the morning, please keep him/her home. Although good attendance is desirable, a sick child should never be sent to school. Please call the school, if your child will be absent.

### **Grade Level Homework**

Homework is an essential part of the curriculum. Meaningful homework is an extension of the curriculum being taught daily in the classroom. Purposeful homework provides data to family and faculty members on how students are understanding the curriculum during the instructional day. Providing students and families with homework that is corrected in a timely fashion allows students and families to seek additional support in learning the curriculum. Homework helps to support the curriculum and most importantly involves families in their child's learning. Homework also promotes organization, responsibility, and self-discipline. Each teacher will communicate their expectations for homework at the beginning of the school year.

Grades K-2 - no more than 30 minutes time on task total, per class per week (math and ELA) - specialists will not give assignments outside instructional day. Due dates will be clear in Canvas.

Grades 3-5 - no more than 30 minutes on task total, per class per week (math, science, and ELA) - specialists will not give assignments outside the instructional day. Due dates will be clear in Canvas. Instrumental music assignments will be in addition.

### **Instrumental Music Program**

Instrumental music classes are offered to third, fourth and fifth graders. Group lessons are given once a week for 30 minutes. Students may choose from strings, woodwinds, brass or percussion. If your child does not own his/her own instrument, they may be rented locally or through School Department approved vendors. At the beginning of each school year, notices will be sent home regarding where and when you can rent instruments.

The classes will rotate. Students are expected to make up missed work and they will have the week to do so. They can watch the portion of your class on videos they missed. Every child will be expected to come to class every week. This is going to be challenging as the schedule will be rotating and they will most likely get new Zoom codes every week.

### **Legal Custody**

If you are divorced and have custody of your child, please provide us with a copy of the legal decree. In this way we can ensure that your child is released on the permission of his/her legal guardian. Without such a decree in our files, we must legally release a child to either parent. If you are divorced/separated and do not have physical custody of your child, but want to receive copies of report cards, your request to the principal must be put in writing each year. (Be sure to include your current mailing address in this request.)

Please note that the school is not responsible for notifying the non-custodial parent of concerts, plays or other school functions. Information is available on the school website.

### **Lost & Found**

Students sometimes lose clothing, lunch boxes and personal property while at school. If you lose something while at school, you should ask to check our Lost & Found, which is in the cafeteria. Help yourself by putting your name on your personal property so you can claim it easily.

### **Make-Up Work Guidelines**

The following are guidelines for making up work a student might have missed because he/she was absent from school. It is important that students make up missed work so they can continue to learn. If a student is going to be absent for one or two days, the teacher will provide the make-up work.

### **Mandated Reporting**

Public school teachers, principals, nurses, psychologists and counselors are mandated by law to report any signs of possible child abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities.

## **Non-Discrimination Notice**

The Pittsfield Public Schools, in accordance with its non-discrimination and zero tolerance policy, does not discriminate in its programs, activities, facilities, employment, or educational opportunities on the basis of race, color, age, disability, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity and does not tolerate any form of discrimination, intimidation, threat, coercion and/or harassment that insults the dignity of others by interfering with their freedom to learn and work. [M.G.L. c.76, s5]

## **Open House/Meet the Teacher**

## **Parking Procedures**

We understand that there is a large volume of traffic that occurs before and after school. Burbank and Second are two streets that are narrow and become easily congested. We encourage you to carpool whenever possible.

**There is absolutely no parking along Burbank Street on the opposite side from the school.** The police and fire departments will ticket cars that stop on the opposite side of the street to pick up children. Parking on both sides blocks traffic and causes a serious safety hazard for the children. Please make sure to pick up your children in front of the school. We ask that all families use the crosswalk in front of Morningside to cross Burbank Street.

Your anticipated cooperation and patience at these times is greatly appreciated.

## **Personal Items (toys, electronics, cell phones, valuables, etc)**

Personal non-educational items are not allowed at Morningside Community School. These items are a distraction to the educational atmosphere we strive for at Morningside. If a staff or faculty member views these items, they will be held for a parent or guardian to pick up. **Morningside administration, faculty, or staff members are not responsible for lost or stolen items.**

## **Photographs**

We take lots of pictures of exciting events at Morningside. These pictures are often posted on our website for you to share with friends and family. There are also times when the local newspaper or the district newspaper visits to write an article on a special event at Morningside.

Each family receives a district and building photograph release form. Please be advised that student names are not posted with pictures on the web site.

## **Retention of Students**

Parents/Guardians of students in danger of retention are informed of this possibility by February 1st. The primary criteria for considering retention are:

\* Academic achievement in all subject areas, especially basic skills mastery, as determined by tests and other and other assessments.

\* Developmental readiness for the next grade.

The professional staff and administration work closely with families in monitoring student progress, discussing appropriate options, and making the final decision.

### **School Cancellations/Delays/Early Closings**

If school is cancelled, or must be closed early, due to emergency situation you will receive an automated phone call from the superintendent. You can also get information from radio and television. Information is also available on the school and district websites.

### **School Council & PTO**

The Morningside Community School Council consists of parent representatives, of teacher representatives, and the principal. The school council is a forum for site-based decision making. The team is responsible for developing the school improvement plan, overseeing the budget, advising the principal on school operations and procedures, and engaging in strategic planning. The calendar will be updated with upcoming meetings. All are welcome to attend meetings.

### **Security**

All doors at Morningside are always locked. Parents/guardians, and other visitors may only enter the school through the front door and must be buzzed into the building by office staff. All visitors must sign in with the office and receive a visitor's pass. Only individuals approved by the staff are allowed into the building.

### **Snacks**

A fruit/vegetable snack will be provided to every child at Morningside at least two times a week. Student allergies and the fruit/vegetable snack are monitored by the cafeteria manager and school nurse.

### **Special Services & Building Assistance Team**

Morningside has programs and professional staff available for children who have special learning needs. They include: reading intervention, speech and language, resource teachers, occupational/physical therapy, ELL support and guidance services.

We encourage you to contact us to share any concerns, questions, suggestions, or successes. We need constructive input from all members of the school community to keep our school on the path of continuous improvement. When expressing a concern or sharing a suggestion, we invite you to be a part of the solution. It is so important to bring our collective best thinking to the table when problems arise. To that end, when communicating with us about an issue, we encourage you to first contact the person who has the closest knowledge of your child's day-to-day progress at school: your child's teacher. As teachers are busy in their classrooms for nearly the entire school day, the best way to get in touch with your child's teacher is to leave a message on the teacher's voicemail with a phone number where you can be reached or to email the teacher directly. The teacher will then contact you when s/he has some time available outside of classroom responsibilities.

If the issue is not resolved at that level, or you wish to connect with us about a school-wide issue, you may contact the principal or dean of students through the school office. Please know that if this is a classroom or child specific issue, the principal will first ask if you have already spoken with the teacher as this is where the first round of conversation needs to take place. Often, many issues are clarified and resolved through a parent-teacher conversation.

Building Assistance Team: We also have available at our school a team to help when student issues (academic or behavioral) persist after initial parent/guardian-teacher conferences and the implementation of interventions that have come out of those conferences. ~~See appendix at end for specifics on the Building Assistance meeting.~~

## **Special Education**

**Director:** Jennifer Stokes 499-9515

Morningside believes in specifically tailoring the instructional and social/emotional needs of every child to promote a successful learning atmosphere. Special Education faculty and Resource rooms are available for students with mild learning disabilities who remain in their regular classrooms for most of the school day. Adaptive physical therapy, individual and group counseling and speech therapy are other available services.

## **Rights of Students with Disabilities**

Federal law guarantees every student the right to a free and appropriate public education regardless of handicap or disability. State regulations (603 CMR 28.00) further guarantee the right to an education in the “least restrictive environment,” in typical settings with students without disabilities.

Every Pittsfield public school offers resource/learning center services. These programs provide specialized instruction for eligible students in the area of the documented disability. The PPS also offers substantially separate setting for students with developmental delays, intellectual impairments, autism, and behavioral disorders. These programs provide specialized instruction in a structured and predictable learning environment.

## **Rights under section 504**

A student with a disability recognized under the federal statute known as Section 504 (29 USC §794 [a]) is entitled to accommodate that disability to the extent that it interferes with the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from any educational or other program of the Pittsfield Public Schools. Section 504 also prohibits discrimination against any students based on such a disability. A student whose disability is recognized under special education law known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA: see USC §1401[3]) is entitled to educational programs and assignments that are designed to develop his or her educational potential. [M.G.L. c. 71B §1] Section 504 accommodation plans in special education individualized education programs (IEPs) must be developed in accordance with procedures set out in federal and Massachusetts law regulations. The 504 coordinator is responsible for ensuring compliance with this Section 504.

## **English Language Learner (ELL) Support**

A student whose home language is not English, as shown by The District home language survey, is administered an English language proficiency assessment. If deemed necessary based on the assessment results, the student is placed in an appropriate ELL program.

For information regarding the ELL program, entrance and exiting procedures, and the rights of families of English language learner students please call the ELL coordinator, Virginia Guglielmo Brady at 413-499-6304.

## **Technology/Computer Use**

All students at Morningside Community School use a variety of technology including desktop and laptop computers, iPods, and iPads. Students are expected to use technology with care and respect at all times. Students are only to use the technology at Morningside for the purpose that the teacher or Principal dictates.

Please read the District's Acceptable Student Use of Technology Policy for more details.

## **Vacations**

We strongly urge parents to plan vacations that don't conflict with the school calendar whenever possible. No matter what make-up work is completed, we cannot fully duplicate the classroom learning experience that is lost by going on vacations of a week or more. Keep in mind that some students have a very difficult time catching up with their classes when they return from such vacations. If you must take your children out of school for an extended vacation when school is in session, please make the office and classroom teacher aware. Work will not be sent home during vacation and will need to be made up upon the student's return. A few days after returning to school, check with your children's teachers to see if any of the children is experiencing difficulties.

**Visiting the School** School office hours are 8:30 a.m. ~ 3:15 p.m.

We welcome visits to our school, but to ensure the safety and security of our students we require all parents, volunteers, and visitors to report to the office to sign-in and receive a badge. When delivering a "forgotten" item to school for your child, please leave the material at the office. A member of the staff will see to it that the item is promptly delivered. **Parents/guardians, and other visitors may only enter the school through the front door and must be buzzed into the building by office staff.** All visitors must sign in with the office and receive a visitor's pass. Only individuals approved by the staff are allowed into the building.



The cafeteria door, loading dock door, and all doors other than the front door are for students and staff only. Exceptions to this policy may be made for certain evening events.

Please see the Visitor's Policy for the District below..

PITTSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Pittsfield, Massachusetts

### **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS**

Recognizing that access to the schools is an important benefit to the community, and also that the physical safety of the students and staff of the Pittsfield Public Schools is a matter of paramount importance, the School Committee established that the Superintendent of Schools shall develop regulations that allow parents, members of the community, and other interested parties to visit the district's schools under circumstances that will preserve the safety of students and staff and will not disrupt classes or other educational activities occurring in the schools.

**The Superintendent shall see to it that those regulations are posted conspicuously in all the district's schools. All those with business in the schools, and all other persons, shall adhere to those regulations.**

**The principal is authorized by the Superintendent, pursuant to School Committee policy, to take any action he/she deems necessary in order to secure the safety of students and district personnel. The principal or his/her designee has the authority to authorize visitors to be present on school grounds as defined in the policy regulations below. Unauthorized visitors or use of the school facility or grounds that does not follow School Committee policy by any visitor, will result in the visitor being asked to leave the school premises immediately and he and she will be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespassing if they refuse.**

**REGULATIONS (Visitors to the Pittsfield Public Schools shall be governed by the following rules):**

1. No unauthorized persons shall be allowed on school grounds from sunset until 6:00 p.m. the next evening except if attending official school activities or other activities recognized and approved by the School System administration or individual school administrators. On weekends and holidays, no unauthorized persons shall be allowed on school grounds from sunset until sunrise except if attending official school activities or other activities recognized and approved by the School System administration or individual school administrators.
2. No unauthorized person shall be allowed in any gated area at any time.
3. All visitors wishing to enter the inside of a school building shall report to the Main Office of the school, sign in, and be issued a visitor's permit, which shall be displayed at all times during the visit. The permit shall be returned to the Main Office, and the visitor shall sign out, upon completion of his/her business in the building. The principal shall establish procedures to effectuate the purposes of the regulations.
4. Any parent or guardian wishing to speak with a specific teacher about the progress of that person's child must make an appointment with the teacher. Scheduling appointments must not interfere with instructional time.
5. Registration such as is described in #3 shall not be required for school functions that are open to the public, whether admission is to be charged or not.
6. Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit the principal, guidance counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and other support personnel, by appointment, in order to discuss any problems or concerns the parent may have regarding the student, whether school related or not.
7. All visitors, including the press, wishing to inspect school records or wishing to interview students on school premises and other media, shall comply with all applicable School Committee rules, regulations, and policies. In any questionable case, the visitor shall be referred by the principal or his/her designee to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, in order to obtain written permission for such a visit. The Superintendent's determination in any such case will be final.
8. Motorcycles, snowmobiles, or any other types of motorized transportation vehicles are prohibited on school property except those used for transportation and from school activities and authorized by the school administration.
9. Security should mean not only maintenance of secure buildings from a locking standpoint, but also being secure from fire hazards and faulty equipment. Security should also extend to safe practices in the use of electrical, plumbing, and heating equipment. Records should be in a safe place and under lock and key as required.



10. Automobiles, trucks, and other vehicular conveyances that are authorized to be on school property are not permitted to travel off the paved roadways, except for those official vehicles authorized to do so in the performance of their responsibilities.
11. All types of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, tobacco (smokeless included) are prohibited on school grounds.

## **Volunteers**

There are many opportunities to volunteer at Morningside. Parents/guardians join PTO committees, assist in special classroom projects, and more! All volunteers are required by law to submit a CORI check form. Information about volunteering will be available at the start of school, or just call our office. There are many ways to share your talents with us!

School Council - The Morningside Community School Council consists of parent representatives, teacher representatives, and representatives from the Morningside Initiative, and the principal. The school council is a forum for site-based decision making. The team is responsible for developing the school improvement plan, overseeing the budget, advising the principal on school operations and procedures, and engaging in strategic planning.

## **2020-2021 School Supply List**

<b>Grade Pre-K</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lysol wipes</li> <li>• (1) 2-pocket folder</li> <li>• (1) 2" poly-binder with pocket in front</li> <li>• Box of tissues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard size backpack</li> <li>• Rest towel or small blanket</li> <li>• An extra set of clothes (top, bottom, underwear, socks)</li> <li>• Reusable water bottle</li> <li>• </li> </ul>

<b>Grade K (Please limit the supplies brought to school to the ones listed below.)</b>		
<b>Personal Items:</b> <b>Please label each item with your child's name.</b>	<b>Classroom Items: These are shared by all.</b> <b>Labeling of these items is not necessary.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• standard size backpack</li> <li>• rest towel (no mats, pillows, or blankets)</li> <li>• an extra set of clothes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pencils</li> <li>• colored pencils</li> <li>• Ziplock bags...all sizes</li> <li>• 5 oz paper or plastic cups</li> <li>• Kleenex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• waterless hand sanitizer</li> <li>• dry-erase markers</li> <li>• Band-Aids</li> <li>• Disinfectant/Lysol Wipes</li> <li>• Baby Wipes</li> </ul>

<b>Grade 1</b>	
<b>Personal Items</b> <b>(please label each item with your child's first and last name)</b>	<b>Classroom Items:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backpack</li> <li>• 24 count crayons</li> <li>• Plastic pencil box/bag</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bottle of hand sanitizer</li> <li>• Disinfectant/Lysol wipes</li> <li>• Box of tissues</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A durable ‘Take Home Folder’</li> </ul>	
<b>Please do NOT send:</b> *binders      *glue bottles      *markers      *pens      *toys      *pencil sharpeners	

Grade 2	
Required Personal Items:	Classroom items to be shared:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand sanitizer</li> <li>• Tissues</li> <li>• 1 subject notebook</li> <li>• Two pocket plastic folder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disinfectant wipes (example: Lysol)</li> <li>• Ziploc bags (sandwich or storage size)</li> <li>• Band-aids</li> <li>• Black dry erase marker</li> <li>• Dry erase eraser</li> </ul>

3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lysol wipes</li> <li>• hand sanitizer</li> <li>• pencil box – hard plastic</li> <li>• colored pencils</li> <li>• paper towels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pencils (not mechanical)</li> <li>• glue sticks</li> <li>• Band-aids</li> <li>• 1 subject lined paper notebook.</li> </ul>

4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
Personal Items:	Classroom Items:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #2 pencils (not mechanical)</li> <li>• colored pencils</li> <li>• Crayola crayons (small box)</li> <li>• small pencil case</li> <li>• homework folder</li> <li>• (3) 1 subject notebooks</li> <li>• (1) 1” three ring binder (for writing)</li> <li>• (1) loose leaf lined paper</li> <li>• pencil top erasers</li> <li>• backpack (with name written in it)</li> <li>• Earbuds/small headphones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lysol/Clorox wipes</li> <li>• baby wipes</li> <li>• any size Ziploc sandwich bags</li> <li>• Band-Aids</li> <li>• hand sanitizer</li> <li>• dry erase markers</li> <li>• tissues</li> <li>• sheet protectors</li> </ul>
<b>Please do NOT send:</b> *Sharpies (permanent markers) *Please only send in the items above. Students do not need or have room for any other items than those listed above. All writing instruments should fit in a small pencil box.	

## **Car Line Dismissal**

### **Family Initiated Dismissal Routine Changes**

In order to make changes to a student’s regular daily dismissal routine, (i.e. a different person picking student up, not riding the bus), a parent/guardian must contact the Main Office **before 12:00 pm that day**. Office staff will verify student information and communicate the routine change to the teacher dismissing your child.

### **Car Line - Regular Dismissal Time**

Parents may not enter the building to pick up children **after 2:40pm**. Morningside parents/guardians who pick-up their child/children at dismissal by vehicle, will be issued a Car Line Number Card that corresponds with their child's /children's assigned number indoors. Car Line Number Cards will be issued to specific parents/guardians and, for the safety of students, may not be shared with any other individual. Car pick up parents/guardians are to line up in a safe, orderly, and responsible manner along the designated car line locations on **2nd Street** and part of **Burbank Street**. They will stay on the right side of 2nd St. and Burbank St, in an orderly line and then proceed towards the loading zone in the front of the school, on Burbank St. where children will be picked up. School faculty will be outside each day to assist parents with parking, transitioning, and safely loading children into their cars. Please do not exit your vehicle once reaching the loading zone. Staff will open vehicle doors and assist students as they get into their seats. Please let staff know if you need a moment securing your child in a safety seat. Parents/Guardians must have their issued Car Line Number Card visibly placed on the right side of the car's dashboard while in the car line. It must remain visible while in the loading zone to ensure students are entering the correct vehicle. We ask that each parent/guardian picking up students by automobile at the end of the day please follow these car line procedures to ensure the safety of our staff, students, and community pedestrians. Here at Morningside Community School we take safety very seriously. Cars illegally parked in fire lanes, bus zones, or unmarked parking areas will be subject to ticketing and/or towing by Pittsfield Parking Services or the Pittsfield Police Department. Anyone trying to pick up a child without a number on their dashboard will be asked to drive around the block via Cherry St, Lincoln St, to 2nd Street to the back of the car line (**NO EXCEPTIONS**).

### **Car Line Pick-Up Rules:**

1. Do NOT get out of your car.
2. Do NOT double park.
3. Do NOT cut the line.
4. The rules of the Car Line apply to everyone.
5. Move Swiftly: when number is called, follow staff directions.
6. First come, first serve - your number does not indicate your location in the pick-up line.

### **Homeless Assistance**

Consistent with the Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, homeless students are defined as those who lack a regular, fixed nighttime residence including supervised temporary accommodations (see definition, Policy STU-14). Students have the right to stay in their school of origin for the entire time they are homeless, even if they move to a different school district. Students who move into permanent housing during the school year can still finish the year in the same school. They may also choose to enroll in a school within the new zone, town or city where they live temporarily. Transportation will be provided unless your new address is within the walking distance of your child's school. For help, call the Deputy Superintendent's office, which serves as the district's homeless liaison, at 499-9510.

## **Principal Guidelines Anti-Bullying Information to be Included in both Employee and School Handbooks**

The following information must be included in your Employee and School Handbooks:

- The name and contact information for the principal and administrative designee tasked with conducting bullying prevention investigations
- Include all the following italicized content in the Anti-Bullying section of these documents.

*Included are selected portions from the 2020-21 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Please refer to the complete document posted on the website at [www.pittsfield.net](http://www.pittsfield.net) for further information.*

### **PITTSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROHIBITION OF BULLYING, CYBER-BULLYING AND RETALIATION:**

*Bullying, including cyber-bullying, and retaliation as defined in this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (BPIP), is not acceptable conduct and is prohibited within the Pittsfield Public Schools. Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Pittsfield Public Schools leadership and staff will strive to maintain learning and working environments that support positive personal relationships between students and between students and staff and are free of bullying. Any student who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension or expulsion in accordance with state law, district policy and student handbooks. In addition to disciplinary consequences, a student engaging in bullying behavior will also receive other interventions intended to build increased competence in relationship-building and other necessary social emotional learning skills.*

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

*Any form of bullying is prohibited:*

- *in any school building and on all school grounds*
- *in district provided virtual learning environments and learning management systems*
- *on property immediately adjacent to school grounds*
- *at a bus stop or on a school bus or any other school sanctioned transportation, such as another vehicle whether owned, leased, or used by the school district*
- *at a school-sponsored or school related activity, function or program whether it takes place on or off school grounds*
- *through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased or used by the school district or school*
- *at any program or location that is not school-related, or through the use of personal technology or electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school*

*As the District's Anti-Bullying Policy (STU-80) states, it is not the District's intent to prohibit students from expressing their ideas, including ideas that may offend the sensibilities of others, or from engaging in civil debate. However, the District does not condone and will take both disciplinary and remedial action in response to conduct that creates a hostile environment and interferes with students' opportunity to learn.*

### **III. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS:**

*The following language and definitions are applied throughout this BPIP and are to be used consistently within the Pittsfield Public Schools in relation to incidents of bullying/cyber-bullying:*

**A. Bullying:** *The repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property; creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school; or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying includes cyber-bullying. (Reference M.G.L. c.71, s. 37O)*

**B. Cyber-bullying:** *Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages and Internet postings, including, but not limited to blogs, websites, and social networking. (Reference M.G.L. c.71, s. 37O)*

**C. Retaliation:** *Any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a student or staff member who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.*

**D. Aggressor:** *A student or staff member who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliatory behavior. (The use of the term aggressor varies from the term "bully" in the Act to Prevent Bullying, yet is being used in the plan under the guidance of the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.)*

**E. Target:** *A student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation is directed.*

**F. Hostile Environment:** *A situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education. (Reference M.G.L. c.71, 37O)*

**G. Staff:** *School staff is defined as including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals.*

**Students with Possible Increased Vulnerability:** *The plan recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics.*

### **REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

### **A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation**

*Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others and may be in oral or written form. Reports made by a staff member must be submitted in writing by the person making the report. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members can be written on the same reporting form or may be made anonymously. Oral or anonymous reports made by a parent and/or student shall be scribed by a staff member in circumstances where a written report was not submitted. Also, a web based system will allow users to file anonymous reports electronically. Click [here](#) for a copy of the [Suspected Bullying Reporting and Determination Form-2](#)*

*Use of a “Suspected Bullying Reporting and Determination Form” (see Appendix B) is required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will:*

- *Annually provide information on how to access the [Suspected Bullying Reporting and Determination Form](#) posted on the website or from their child’s school building.*
- *The Suspected Bullying Reporting and Determination Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.*
- *Annually, the school or district will provide the school community, including administrators, educators and other staff, students and parents or guardians with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation as parts of district and school handbooks. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be included in these handbooks, on the school and district website, and in information made available to parents or guardians.*

### **B. Reporting by Staff**

*Every school or district staff member, including but not limited to, central office administrators, building principals and administrators, school adjustment counselors and school psychologists, teachers and related service providers, paraprofessional staff, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodial staff, bus drivers, athletic coaches and extracurricular advisors is required to monitor and address student behavior and to intervene when unkind behavior occurs. This includes immediately ensuring that any need for student safety in the present moment is restored. Concern about any bullying or retaliatory conduct must also be reported as soon as possible to the principal or the administrator designated to investigate suspected bullying behavior.*

*In addition, if any adult suspects that a student is being targeted and bullied, they are required to fill out the district suspected bullying determination form and submit it to the building administrator. As the person who has witnessed the behavior it is most effective if that staff member makes contact with the family of the target and the aggressor to give the clearest description of the bullying behavior and the steps planned to take to promote respectful behavior in your classroom.*

*The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority and the responsibility of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.*

### **C. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians and Others**

*The school or district asks students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or administrative designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Anonymous reports can be made from a link on the district website. [Suspected Bullying Reporting and Determination Form-2](#). Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report or may report orally. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the principal or designee. A student who knowingly makes a false allegation of bullying or retaliation shall also be subject to disciplinary action.*

#### ***D. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation***

##### ***Safety First***

*Before fully investigating allegations of bullying or retaliation, the staff member, principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but are not limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.*

*The staff member, principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting the following persons from bullying or retaliation: a student/staff member who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student/staff member who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student/staff member who provides information during an investigation, or a student/staff member who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.*

##### ***Notification Requirements***

*Notice to Parents or Guardians: Upon investigation and determination that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor and will review response protocols. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.*

*Notice to Another School or District: If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.*

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

enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

*In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and in compliance with school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer or another member of the Pittsfield Police Department in the absence of a school resource officer and/or other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.*

### ***Investigation***

*The following provides general guidelines for responding to a report of bullying or retaliation. Note that the guidelines should be modified as necessary to respond appropriately to the individual complaint.*

*Pre-Investigation:* *Before fully investigating allegations of bullying or retaliation, school personnel will assess the level of need and take immediate steps to support the alleged target and/or protect the alleged target from further potential incidents of concern. If the initial report is to or by a staff member, the staff member will complete an initial review of the situation and intervene as necessary. The staff member will make a referral to the principal or administrative designee if further administrative investigation is needed.*

*Investigation:* *The investigator will seek to determine the basis of the complaint, gather information from the complainant, including such matters as what specifically happened, who committed the alleged acts, who was present or may have information about the events, when the events occurred and where the events occurred.*

*The principal or designee will promptly investigate all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.*

*During the investigation the principal or designee will interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and could result in disciplinary and restorative actions in alignment with the Student Code of Conduct, Character, and Support.*

*The principal or administrative designee and other staff members, as determined by the principal or administrative designee, may conduct interviews. To the extent practical, given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal, designee and any other interviewers will maintain a written record of the investigation. Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for other investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.*

*Determinations:* *The principal or designee will make a determination based upon the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted from participating in school or from school activities. The principal or designee will, one, determine what remedial action is required, if any, and, two, determine what response and/or disciplinary or restorative actions are necessary as guided by the Student Code of Conduct, Character, and Support.*



*Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development and/or mental health interventions.*

*The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor orally about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken with other students unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.*

## **Responses to Bullying**

### **Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-Building**

*Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the school principal or designee will decide upon a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior and restore/repair relationships. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Some skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:*

- *Offering individualized skill-building or restorative sessions;*
- *Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students in consultation with guidance and/or school adjustment counselors and other appropriate school personnel;*
- *Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral interventions and supports to help students understand prosocial ways to achieve their goals;*
- *Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;*
- *Developing individual behavior plans to include a focus on specific social skill development; and*
- *Making a referral for counseling or other mental health services for targets, aggressors and family members.*

### **Taking Disciplinary Action**

*If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of information gathered through investigation by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the BPIP and with the district and school's Code of Conduct, Character and Support. Discipline up to and including suspension and expulsion may be applied by the school principal. All suspensions or expulsions are subject to review by the Superintendent and his/her designee with the student and parents afforded full due process rights.*

*If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.*

*Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and state laws regarding student discipline. A manifest determination will*

*be completed to determine the connection between a student's bullying behavior and his/her disability. As necessary, a special education team will be reconvened to review the student's IEP.*

*Students with disabilities are known to be considered to be a vulnerable population for both being bullied and, in some disability categories, for engaging in bullying behavior. The risk for this will be reviewed at all IEP initial, reevaluation and annual meetings as part of the IEP process to determine appropriate interventions, both universal for all students and individualized.*

#### *Promoting Safety for the Target and Others*

*The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well.*

*Supportive services will be assessed and offered to the target. These services may include safety planning, school adjustment counselor services and mental health referral, as well as, increased use of Tier 1 classroom strategies that promote safe and supportive learning environments.*

*Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures or other responses are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.*